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INTRODUCTION

THIS short outline of the Chief Periods in English Literature does not in any wise claim to be more than an introduction to the subject, but it is intended to form a basis for good oral lessons, and to be used as a text-book in conjunction with such lessons.

I have endeavoured to preserve the consecutive narrative as far as possible, so that the book may form a Literature Reader to be used with some book of Specimen Extracts.

The chief object of the compiler of such an outline literature ought to be to encourage pupils to read for themselves the works of our great authors, and one great step in accomplishing this is to arouse interest in the growth and development of our literature, and in the personality of the great men who form its central figures. Apart even from their literary interest, the lives and characters of such men as Milton, Dr. Johnson, Scott, or Wordsworth, are quite invaluable for study.

I have added a short Bibliography, which I hope will be found useful both to young teachers and students of the subject.

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SKETCH OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

PERIOD I

EARLY TIMES TO ABOUT 1350

Literature—Its beginnings in England—Celtic—Saxon—Effects of Danish invasions—Ælfred's work—Norman Conquest—Chronicles and romances—Thirteenth century.

LITERATURE may be defined as the expression of thought and feeling in good prose or beautiful poetry. It gives us the thoughts of the great men of a nation—not those great in rank, or in their opportunities of acquiring knowledge, but

What Literature is. great in that Heaven-given power which it is difficult to define in words, a power which has in it something of the prophetic nature, as the

Romans felt when they named the poet among them the “vates,” or seer ; something of the creative power, as the Greeks realized when they took their title from “poiein,” to create, and the Scotch when they called him a “makkar.”

All literature worthy of the name must possess certain characteristics in common. It must have thought, and it must have style or character in the expression of this thought. It must also, if it is to influence many in the present or future, be put into *written* form, but this condition is not necessarily attached to literature. Long before writing was known, or, at any rate, familiar, poetry was learnt and handed down as a precious possession from father to son. At

the present day the speech of the orator, with the noblest thought and feeling expressed in the best and most artistic language, should rank with the best literature, even if there were no such thing as printing or newspaper reporters. Literature and history are very closely connected. History

**Connection
with
History.**

is the character of a nation manifested through its actions. Literature is the character of that nation as shown in its thoughts and feelings. We must read the two together if we want really to study the life of any nation.

To have a great national literature it is necessary to have a great national language in which it may be expressed. For many centuries England did not possess such a language. Different races and tribes peopled it, each having a different speech or dialect, no one tongue being universally understood. The Norman Conquest only added to the confusion by introducing a fresh element, the Norman-French language, so that it was not until about the fourteenth century that one form of English, largely mixed with French, asserted its supremacy over the other dialects and became in all senses the national tongue, and the parent of modern English. It is, then, with the writers of the fourteenth century that English literature properly begins. The fifth to the fourteenth centuries, during which the national tongue was thus developing, and the literature which belongs to them, form a distinct epoch, and are interesting as being the period of preparation, without studying which it is almost impossible to properly appreciate the work of Chaucer and his contemporaries.

The earliest known inhabitants of these islands were of Celtic race, the great race to which the Highland-Scotch, Irish, Welsh, and Manx belong.

Very few names of *Celtic writers* have come down to us. The Roman conquest of Britain (begun in A.D. 42, and carried out during the first half of the next century) introduced Latin as the language of civilization and learning.

Many old Celtic traditions were put into the songs of the race, which celebrated the great deeds of the hero chieftains Fingal and Ossian, or, later, of King Arthur and his knights, and of the wonderful enchanter Merlin.

The influence exercised on English literature by the Celts was of a nature not easily defined. It consisted in the

Celtic Influence. introduction of a finer, more imaginative, and more artistic element; it helped to give a lightness of touch to the heavier work of the Saxon, and certainly deepened the sense of the supernatural.

Celtic influence is to be felt in the character (and in the expression in literature of that character) of the succeeding generations, formed from the blending of the two races.

In the fifth century came the abandonment of Britain by the Romans, and the consequent helplessness of the Britons against attacks from outside, and the invitation to the Saxons. Then a century and a half of struggle with the new-comers (Teutonic in race), until the Celts retired to the West, to keep firm possession of Wales and Cornwall, and the various tribes of the Teutones made settlements all over the rest of the island.

These Teutonic tribes had a literature of their own, consisting of wild war-songs. Their poetry had neither rhyme nor

Early Saxon Literature. metre, the place of rhyme being supplied by alliteration, or the regular recurrence of words having the same letter of the alphabet, generally for their initial letter. There was also a kind

of natural swing in the poetry, produced by the accents in each couplet, but the number of feet and syllables was not restricted, as in modern verse. The subjects nearest the heart are evidently—heroic warfare and religion. The simple straightforward character of our Saxon ancestors, rising at its best to an earnest striving after truth, comes out in this early poetry.

The earliest famous poem in the language, *Beowulf*, was

written by one of our ancestors before the race settled in England, but the version of the poem which “Beowulf,” we possess was probably written by a poet of 625. Northumbria in the seventh century. It is full of the love of war and wild adventure, and gives us the heroic figure fighting against terrible odds, and yet surmounting all difficulties in the end, a picture which has always had such a fascination for mankind in the tales of Hercules, Perseus, or of Guy of Warwick and St. George.

The poem gives an account of a certain King of the Danes, Hrothgar, who built a palace for himself and his followers, but was attacked and driven from his new home by a monster called the Grendel. No help was forthcoming until a brave young Norse Viking, Beowulf by name, heard of the dire distress of the King and came to the rescue. He wrestled with the Grendel and overcame him, and the following night was attacked by a far more formidable figure in the Grendel's mother. In the end he pursued her to her own den in the dreary morass, and there slew her. The second part of the poem relates Beowulf's adventures in his own land, how he became King and ruled his people well. He died in a heroic effort to free his country from the devastations of a fiery dragon. The dragon was slain, but its poisonous breath killed the brave conqueror.

The conversion of the Saxon tribes to Christianity, beginning with the mission of Augustine in 597, went on under Roman or Celtic missionaries during the greater part of the seventh century. Then followed the establishment of monasteries throughout the land. These monasteries acted at first very much like good mission-stations of the present day; they became the centre of religious life, and also of civilization and learning for the people.

One of the noblest and best of these was the large double monastery (for men and women) built at Whitby, and presided over by the Abbess Hilda, a woman who combined high culture and learning with a noble devotion to the good of souls.

Christian
Element
in Poetry.

Cædmon, a herdsman working on one of the monastery farms, was probably one of her converts from amongst the many heathen Saxons around. On one occasion he was present at a feast given by his old neighbours and friends, when, according to the usual custom after supper, songs were sung in honour of the old Teutonic gods and heroes. *Cædmon*, unable to join in these praises, and knowing no lay in which he could celebrate

Cædmon's
Poems,
670.

the glory of the true God, left the banquet and went out to the stables. There, his thoughts full of the late incident, he fell asleep, and in a wonderful vision an angel appeared to him and bid him sing. "What shall I sing?" asked the astonished man in his humility. "Sing of how God made all things," was the reply. And *Cædmon* began to sing, and the verses came to him as he praised God the Creator. When he awoke he still remembered his verses, and repeated them to Hilda the next day. At the monastery on the cliff it was soon acknowledged that God had given him the gift of song. *Cædmon* was received into the monastery, where he could be taught and trained to use his great gift well. The beautiful Bible stories of the Old Testament were put into verse by him, until a long poem forming a rugged but vigorous paraphrase of the Book of Genesis was produced. Such is the story of *Cædmon*, resting chiefly on the foundation of Bede, and surrounded by a mist of tradition, but still with enough truth in it to show us the effect of Christianity on the poetry which sought first to set forth the glory of God.

There were other poems of this early period, some of which continued the paraphrasing of the Old Testament Scriptures. Very few names of authors have come down to us; but one name, that of *Cynewulf* has been preserved, owing to the author's habit of distributing the letters of his name in his poems.

Two collections of the scattered early poems exist. One is called the *Vercelli Book*, from the name of the Italian monastery where the MSS. were found, and the other, the *Exeter Book*, is preserved in the library of Exeter Cathedral. The most

interesting poems in these collections are *Christ*, *The Dream of the Cross*, and *Elene*, by Cynewulf, and a series of poems on Christ's life by an author unknown, date about 780.

The next great name in literature is that of the *Venerable Bede*. He was brought up, from the age of seven in a religious house, first at Wearmouth, then at Jarrow-on-Tyne. He was

ordained priest at the age of thirty, and from
 Bede, thenceforth gave up his time to teaching in the
 died 735. schools of the monastery, where he had spent

his life. For his beloved pupils he wrote a series of text-books, music, astronomy, rhetoric, and arithmetic. Such knowledge as the world possessed of these things at that time was put into these books in a form that could be used by his boys. His great work was the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* from the landing of St. Augustine to the year 731. This interesting work and his various text-books were written in Latin; but Bede made one most important contribution to Old English literature in his *Translation of the Gospel of St. John*. This, our first great prose work in the English tongue, was the last work of the old man; its last chapter, dictated to his scholars as they closed round his death-bed, formed a true "Nunc Dimittis" to a pure and noble life.

Another Northumbrian, *Alcuin* (735-804), carried the fame of English learning beyond England. Brought up at the famous York school established by Archbishop Egbert, he early attracted the attention of Charlemagne, who made him his Minister of Public Instruction, and kept him at his Court for eight years.

He revisited England from time to time, and always worked zealously for the reform of the monasteries. It is to Alcuin chiefly that we owe the development of the "Scriptorium" system in the monasteries, which proved an inestimable boon to future generations. His letters are of great interest, especially as throwing light on the Church history of the time, and besides these we have from him poems and "Lives" of some of the saints.

So far the province of Northumbria, stretching from the

Humber to the Firth of Forth, and peopled by the Angle race, had been the chief home of literature ; but towards the close of the eighth century began those fatal incursions of the Danes which were for a time a death-blow to all learning and culture. It was the North which suffered most

Danish
Invasions. severely from these attacks, and the monasteries, the homes of civilization and learning, were the special object of their animosity. All the treasures of art and literature collected and preserved by the efforts of such men as Benedict Biscop, Egbert of York, and Alcuin, were ruthlessly swept away before these barbarian invaders.

It was under our first great King, *Ælfred*, that literature again revived. The early part of his reign was occupied in severe struggles with the Danes, but in 878 the

Ælfred,
871-901. Peace of Wedmore secured comparative quiet, and *Ælfred* devoted himself to the good of his

people. He recognised that the great means of civilizing them would be to raise the standard of education among them. He therefore established schools everywhere, encouraged scholars and writers to come from other lands, caused translations of books to be made for the use of his schools, and himself personally inspected them. In all this he was helped by his friend and secretary, Asser, a Welsh monk, who afterwards wrote his life. *Ælfred* himself contributed to literature a translation of *Orosius' Universal History*, the *Consolations of Boëthius*, the *Pastoral Care of Gregory the Great*, and to him is always attributed also the beginning of the *Angle-Saxon Chronicle*, the earlier part of which was probably compiled from Bede's history. But the seat of learning had changed. Under *Ælfred* Wessex was its centre, and the West Saxon dialect its tongue.

In the tenth century the attacks of the Danes were renewed with great vigour, and we have little of note in the way of literature. Two spirited war-ballads appear in

Two
War-songs. the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*—the *Song of Brunanburh*, to celebrate *Æthelstan's* great victory in 937 over a combined force of Scots, Danes, and men of

Cumbria, and the *Fight of Maldon or the Death of Byrhtnoth*, a pathetic lament over the defeat of the Ealderman of Northumbria by the Danes in the year 994.

At the beginning of the eleventh century came the Danish invasion and dynasty (1013-1042), and, except under Cnut, who was a more worthy successor to Ælfred and Æthelstan than any of their own race, little encouragement was given to learning or literature. That the Danes have left so little mark on our language and literature is partly attributable to the fact that they were so closely allied to the Saxons in race that when they once settled down among them they quickly coalesced with them, and borrowed from the more civilized race they had partially conquered. Still there are traces easily discernible to this day left by the Danes on the language and character of the people of our Northern counties.

It was quite a different matter when the Normans settled down as the conquerors of England. The Normans were also originally closely akin to the Saxons and Danes.

Effects of Norman Conquest. They were Northmen who had settled in the North of France early in the tenth century, but they had given up to a great extent their old language, and by degrees adopted a dialect of French, which, mixed with their old tongue, was known as Norman-French. This became the language of the Court and of the ruling classes; the Saxon nobles, when they wanted to find favour with authority, had to learn it; the Bishops and higher clergy were nearly all chosen from the conquering race; so that the Saxon tongue was restricted to the lower and uneducated classes. Still, the majority of the people clung to it firmly, held aloof from any willing intercourse with their conquerors, and the two languages were used side by side for quite two centuries after the Conquest without any sign of amalgamation. This conflict between the two races had a very deadening effect on literature; and, as neither race understood the other's tongue, it became natural for writers to use a language common to all learned people, and write in Latin.

The Normans introduced a distinct taste for history-writing,

and most of the literature of the early Norman period took the form of chronicles, written generally in the monasteries and in Latin.

Among these monastic chroniclers we have *William of Malmesbury* (1095-1142), of mixed Saxon and Norman birth.

He was a monk and librarian of Malmesbury.
Chronicle-writers. He wrote a history of Britain from 449 to the end of Henry I.'s reign, adding later a sequel

on Stephen's reign up to 1142, the year of the chronicler's death. *Henry of Huntingdon* wrote a history of the English about 1154. *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, a Welsh priest, wrote, about 1147, a history of the Britons, and introduced into it the element of Celtic legend and tradition, in which the form of the hero-King Arthur is prominent. The book became most popular. A Norman-French version of it was made by Wace in 1155, and this was eagerly read at Court.

The work of Geoffrey of Monmouth seems to form a link between the two prevalent kinds of literature in the Norman-French period, the Chronicle-history and the Romance. The Norman-French romance-writers were chiefly to be found among the *trouvères* of the North of France, who wove the romances into heroic songs.

Walter Map was the greatest of the romance-writers in England. He began by writing satires: "Bishop Golias," on the self-indulgence of the clergy; "On the

Map, trifles of Courtiers;" but his most important
 about 1155. work is a collection of the legends of King Arthur. These are taken in the main from Geoffrey of Monmouth's history; but Map treated them differently, introducing a Christian spirit and meaning in the story of the Holy Graal which had no place in Geoffrey's history. This story, which reappears three centuries later, joined again to the Arthurian romances, and then again in the nineteenth century in Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," has always exercised a great fascination over English readers.

Tradition says that the Holy Graal (the dish which held the Paschal Lamb at the Last Supper) was held in great reverence,

and brought by Joseph of Arimathea to Britain when he fled there from persecution, and made the first Christian settlement at Glastonbury. Then, the story runs, as time went on

and the monks became absorbed in their own interests, the treasure was forgotten, until in King Arthur's days (sixth century A.D.) no one knew what had become of it. St. Joseph revealed in a vision to a hermit that the Holy Graal, lost through men's carelessness and indifference, would again, by God's mercy, be revealed to the man who was pure in heart and life.

Map, in dwelling on this story, raises the ideal of knight-hood. The ideal knight is no longer the one who can win most battles and kill most enemies, but the best Christian knight, in character and conduct "sans reproche"; and Map makes the noblest of Arthur's knights set forth in quest of the Holy Graal, to the vision of which the pure-hearted Galahad alone attains.

The romances beginning with "The Story of the Holy Graal" give us also the romance of Merlin, the story of Sir Launcelot of the Lake, and end with the Mort Dartus.

This work was in Latin, and thus accessible to comparatively few; but early in the thirteenth century an English romance appears—the first work of any importance in the native tongue since the Conquest, if we except the fragment of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle relating the history between the Conquest and the year 1154—written in the Midland dialect by a monk of Peterborough. This book was founded on a romance taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth, and put into English verse by a poor priest of Worcestershire, *Layamon*.

It was a long poem, relating the early history of Britain under its legendary founder, Brut, and partly translated from the Norman-French version of the same story by Wace. It was written in alliterative verse and in the Southern dialect, the direct successor of Ælfred's West Saxon.

The next work of any value is the *Ormulum* (1215), called after its author, Orm or Ormin, an Augustinian monk living

in the East of England. It was written in the East Midland dialect, which was soon to become the prevailing one. This dialect had become much less inflectional than the Saxon of pre-Conquest times, chiefly owing to Danish influence, and had introduced a large number of Danish words. The "Ormulum" is a metrical version of the service for each day.

The *Ancoren Riwle* (Rule of Nuns) is also a religious work, containing instructions for the younger members of a religious order. It is written in the Southern dialect about 1220.

One pretty Old English lyric remains to us from the thirteenth century—*The Owl and the Nightingale* (1280), by *Nicholas of Guildford*. The two birds quarrel over their respective merits, and call on Nicholas to judge between them :

"Master Nicholas of Guildford,
He is wise and wary of words,
He is skilful of giving decision,
And every vice is hateful to him ;
He knows well in every song
Who sings right and who sings wrong,
And he can distinguish from the right
The wrong, the darkness from the light."

So far the English literature has shown in its language little trace of Norman influence. The Norman words in "The Owl and the Nightingale," though written about midway through the thirteenth century, can be easily counted.

But after about 1260 there is a great influx of Norman-French words, which goes on steadily increasing for the next century. The mixture of the two races fostered by such events as the loss of the French possessions in the thirteenth century, the French wars of Edward III.'s reign, which united the nobles of Saxon and Norman descent against a common foe, all tended towards producing this result, and also prepared the way for the final adoption of English as the national tongue, though it was English modified by the influence of Norman-French.

Among the chroniclers of this period are *Matthew Paris*, who wrote his history about 1273 and boldly criticised in it the

faults of rulers in Church and State, and *Robert of Gloucester*, whose rhyming chronicle, produced about 1298, purported to give the history of Britain from the siege of Troy to the year 1272. He speaks of the late spread of the knowledge of French throughout the country. "Unless a man knows French," he writes, "the world thinks very little of him, but the common men hold to English and to their own speech still."

Period of
Norman-
French
Influence.

The revival of religious life under the preaching of the friars in the thirteenth century, the awakening desire for reform in Church matters, which was soon to be such a marked feature in English thought, found vent in a number of religious manuals. *Robert of Brunne* or *Bourne* wrote such a manual about 1303: *The Handlyng Synne*—that is to say, the "besetting sin." The subject is treated in a series of moral tales on the Ten Commandments, the seven deadly sins, the twelve virtues, and so on, interspersed with legends of the saints.

The *Cursor Mundi* (or "Course of the World"), written about 1320, is a metrical version of the Old and New Testament, containing also various legends of the saints.

The *Pricke of Conscience*, about 1340, is by *Richard Rolle*, of *Hampole*, a hermit, who protests bravely against some of the religious abuses of his day.

The *Ayenbite of Inwyrt* (the Remorse of Conscience), in spite of its quaint Saxon title, is a translation of a French treatise on repentance, made by a Brother of St. Augustine's Monastery at Canterbury.

In all these works there is a large proportion of Norman-French words, and in the poetry metre and rhyme take the place continually of the Saxon alliteration.

The heroic war-ballad, of which we have specimens in the songs of *Brunanburh* and *Maldon*, reappears in the poems of *Lawrence Minot*, written somewhere about 1350, in a broader dialect, closely akin to the Scotch. The victories of Edward III. over the Scotch and the French form the theme of a series of

war-poems. The siege of Calais, without the pathetic story of Queen Philippa and the burghers, which we owe to Froissart's chronicle, and the Battle of Neville's Cross, are celebrated among other triumphs. One poem deals with the exploits of a certain John of Doncaster, an English yeoman, who with thirty archers succeeded in taking the fortress of Guines, near Calais. It ends with the fervent prayer :

“God save Sir Edward his right
In everilka need ;
And he that will not so,
Evil mote he speed.”

PERIOD II

AGE OF CHAUCER TO DAWN OF THE RENAISSANCE

Revival of English literature—Settlement of language—Religious and social influences—Langland—Chaucer—Fifteenth-century poets—Lowland Scotch poetry—Prose—Ballads.

“THE low men hold to English and to their own speech still,” writes Robert of Gloucester, towards the close of the thirteenth century, in his history, which is so largely tinged with Norman-French. By the latter half of the fourteenth the “low men” had gained the day, English had prevailed, and French, probably rendered more unpopular by the wars of Edward III.’s reign, was everywhere retreating before its influence. In 1339

English began to be used instead of French in boys’ schools as a medium for learning their Latin; in 1362 it was decreed that the pleadings in the law-courts should henceforth be in English. The form of English which in the end

asserted its supremacy over the other dialects was the East Midland dialect, the language spoken in London and round about, and thus the language of the Court—the King’s English; the language spoken in Oxford and Cambridge, and so the language of learning; and, finally, the language in which Chaucer and his contemporaries were to write, and thus stamp it for ever as the language of literature. This “King’s English” was a mixed language. In its foundations of grammar and construction it was the direct descendant of the Old English of pre-Norman times, though showing the influence of Norman French in the modification of its inflectional

character, and in the very mixed nature of its vocabulary. With a national language established, the way is prepared for a great national poet—one who should have a message for all and be understood of all.

Such a poet we have in Geoffrey Chaucer, "the first finder of our faire langage," as one of his disciples, Occleve, calls him.

But, first, we must speak briefly of the influences at work on men's minds in England during the fourteenth century, and notice two great works which preceded Chaucer's.

The great religious revival under the preaching of the friars in the thirteenth century had roused enthusiasm for Apostolic teaching and action, and had opened men's eyes to the great need of reform in the Church. The friars came among the people at first disowning all riches and honour, and living the simple lives of Christ and His Apostles as they tended the sick and poor and taught the ignorant. But as time went on the favours and gifts of the rich corrupted the orders of friars, until there was not much to choose between them and the monks whose idleness and self-indulgence they had at first denounced. The desire for reform in the Church had been thoroughly aroused, and the voices which demanded it were never again to be silenced.

Side by side with this cry for more reality, more purity in religion, there was a great and increasing desire for social freedom and equality. The old social order of things was passing away, but not without a struggle. Men were beginning to feel that they had rights of their own, that the oppressive supremacy of the Barons was unjust, that serfdom should be abolished. The times were evil for the poor. Ground down by taxation to pay for the French wars, their numbers devastated by a loathsome and deadly plague, the Black Death, repressed by a succession of severe statutes, by which the Government hoped to reorganize labour, it is little wonder that their hearts were filled with bitter hatred of the social system under which they lived, or that this hatred found vent often in violent denunciation and riotous uprisings.

Naturally, this strong craving for religious and social freedom is to be found reflected in the literature of the day ; and we find there also one other influence, a literary one, the influence of the new learning which had already begun to affect Italy powerfully, and was to appear for the first time in England in the works of Chaucer. This we must notice later in speaking of his poetry.

The social and religious movements found full expression in the writings of *William Langland*, whose great poem, the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, is a deeply earnest satire on the corruptions of Church and State. Hypocrisy in religious life, the luxurious lives of the monks, the oppressive encroachments of the Papal power, the oppression of the poor by the rich, the cruelty of the severe enactments, are all treated with a view to reform and under allegorical forms. We know hardly anything of

the life of the author. Born about 1322 at **William Langland**, Cleobury-Mortimer, in Shropshire, he was 1322-1400. probably put to school at the priory at Great Malvern, and educated as a cleric. He does not seem, however, to have taken full orders, but to have been attached to one of the inferior clerical orders. In one part of his poem he describes himself as a tall gaunt man, passing by the name of Long Will, gaining a small and precarious livelihood by singing at the funeral services of the rich. His great poem was, probably, written about 1362. It is an allegory, treating, like Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," of the trials and difficulties which beset the Christian's path through life, and is named "*Piers Plowman*" because it is meant to represent the thoughts and feelings of the simple Englishman of the day. The character has also a deeper allegorical meaning as the ideal Christian, and in some passages even as Christ Himself. The poem is essentially Teutonic in form, though the author

"*Piers Plowman*," employs many Romance words. It is written in alliterative verse, without rhyme and in long lines of twelve syllables, which, however, are frequently arranged in couplets of six syllables each.

The author imagines himself falling asleep on the Malvern

Hills, when he sees a vision of a "faire field full of folke." The introductory lines are a good example of the style of the poem :

"In a summer season, when soft was the sun,
I shope me in shroudes, as I a shepe were,
In habit as a hermit, unholy of works,
Went wide in this world wonders to hear ;
And on a May morning, on Malvern hills,
Me befel a ferly of fairy me thought ;
I was weary forwandered, and went me to rest
Under a brode bank by a bornes side.
And as I lay and looked in the waters,
I slumbered in a sleeping—it swayed so merry."

The field is the world : in the far east is the Tower of Truth, towards which all men's faces should be set ; in the dim west the Valley of Death, and a deep dungeon, the abode of darkness and evil. All classes are represented there—monks and friars, nobles and merchants, jesters and ploughmen—and all sorts of aims are being substituted for truth : as, for instance, ease, pleasure, gain. A fair lady (Holy Church) offers to be the guide of the bewildered poet. She teaches him that, "when all treasures are tried, truth is the best," and admonishes him to teach all men this lesson, and guide them towards truth. She points out to him, too, the various characters, and bids him beware of Falsehood, who, under fair disguise, is to be married to Meed, or Bribery. This occupies the prologue and Passus I. of the poem. In the next three parts the story of Falsehood and Meed is followed out. Falsehood is at last unmasked, and takes refuge with the Friars. In Passus V. Reason pleads with the people ; many are brought to repentance, and cry out for a guide to Truth. A palmer is appealed to, to show them the way ; but though he has visited every shrine in Christendom he has never heard of such a saint as Truth. Then a poor Ploughman arises, and says he knows Truth, the best of all masters.

"He is the quickest payer that poor men have."

The way is, however, beset with difficulties ; it is the old way of God's commandments, and many turn back and forsake

their guide. To those who are inclined to persevere, Piers Plowman gives as a test a half-acre of land to be ploughed. Many fail even in this, but to those who succeed Piers Plowman presents a bull of pardon sent by Truth.

The Dreamer awakes with the words of the pardon ringing in his ears: "Those that have *done well* shall pass into life eternal." In another vision he is taught what to "do well" means. This vision constitutes a second part to the poem of "Piers Plowman." It is an elaborate allegory, in which "Do well," "Do better," "Do best," are shown forth as different stages of the Christian character, and the life and character of Christ as the perfect man are identified with each stage. Thus, in His early life of obedience to His parents He was "Do well"; in His active ministry, "Do better"; in His risen and intercessory life, "Do best."

One more poem, *Richard the Redeless*, 1399, on the deposition of the unfortunate Richard II., bears Langland's name.

Throughout his allegories we have vivid pictures of the life of the time—the jealous rivalry of the religious orders, the oppression of the rich, the injustice in "high places," the grinding poverty and misery of the lower orders. The spirit of the writer is deeply earnest; he grieves bitterly for the ignorance and misery of his fellow-men, but he always puts before them the one hope of salvation for mankind, the search for Christ.

The new religious spirit and the cry for reform is expressed still more plainly in the work of *John Wyclif*. Educated at

Wyclif,
1324-1384.

Oxford, and appointed Master of Balliol College, he became leader of the party strongly in opposition to the Pope's exactions, and his first literary work was a series of pamphlets on this subject. He was brought to trial before the Bishop of London, but John of Gaunt declared himself so strongly in his favour that the examination broke down and Wyclif was dismissed. His next work was to form a Society of "Poor Priests," who were sworn to poverty and devotion to the care and teaching of the lower classes.

In 1376 Wyclif was given the living of Lutterworth, where he spent the rest of his life as a hard-working parish priest. In his sermons and pamphlets he sought to show how far the Church had departed from the pure faith taught by Christ's Apostles, and thus Wyclif struck the first note of the English Reformation. As regards literature, the great work of his life was the first complete *translation into English of the Bible*, 1380. It was written in the East Midland dialect.

In Langland we see the protest against the evils of the time, from one who understood well the people of the land; in Wyclif we have the protest of one who represents the thought of the Universities and educated classes; in John Gower the same spirit influenced a poet of the upper middle class.

John Gower was a country gentleman of Kent, a contemporary and friend of Chaucer, who dedicated "Troilus and

Cressid" to him in words which have become
Gower's a fixed epithet, "O moral Gower!" Gower's
Works. writings illustrate well the transition which

occurred in the English language and literature about the middle of the fourteenth century. His earliest work is in French, his next in Latin, his last poem in English. This first work, the *Speculum Meditantis*, is now entirely lost, but other short poems of his are extant, written in Anglo-Norman, and in style and form following the poets of the North of France. The second great poem, *Vox Clamantis*, written in Latin, treated the Peasant Revolt of 1381 under an allegorical form. The poet speaks plainly of the evils of his day, and in the course of his long poem satirizes many classes, being specially severe on the clergy and the lawyers. Though Gower is a great advocate of clerical reform, he has no sympathy with the opinions of Wyclif and his followers. Gower's last poem, the *Confessio Amantis*, 1393, was written in English and, it is said, at the suggestion of King Richard II. It consists of seven books, written in allegorical form, each illustrating one of the seven deadly sins. They seem to have been written at various times, the earlier ones dedicated to Richard II., and

the later ones to Henry of Lancaster. He does not write as easily in English as Chaucer, and introduces a large number of French words.

Geoffrey Chaucer, the "father of English poetry," was born in London, 1340 (?). He was the son of John Chaucer, vintner, who had apparently some connection with the Court, and the boy was early taken into the service of Lionel of Clarence, third son of Edward III. In 1359 he was in the wars in France, was taken prisoner, and ransomed the next year, and seems to have entered the King's service soon after. In 1369 he was again engaged in the French war, and in 1372 was sent to Italy on a diplomatic mission; similar errands were repeated to Flanders and France in 1377, and again to Italy in the following year.

When in England he fulfilled the duties of Comptroller of the Custom of Wools and Skins in the Port of London. In 1382 he was made Comptroller of the Petty Customs of London, and in 1386 took his seat in Parliament as Knight of the Shire of Kent. John of Gaunt had always been his patron, and on his fall from power Chaucer's fortunes suffered, and he lost his offices in the Customs.

After some vicissitudes of fortune, a life-pension was granted to Chaucer in 1394, and this was increased on the accession of Henry IV. in 1399. He died in October, 1400, at Westminster, and was buried in the Abbey. Chaucer began his literary career as a translator, adapter, and imitator of French poetry. This naturally followed from the fact of his being a poet of the Court where the French language and literature were still the accepted standard for cultured people. In his early work, then, Chaucer may be looked upon as an English

**Early
Poetry:
French
Influence.**

Trouvère, and throughout his life we find him influenced more or less strongly by the style and method of composition of the French poets of the Middle Ages. From them he borrowed the allegorical method of treatment and the forms of verse which he usually employed, and from

them, too, his love of medieval tradition and the love-poetry of chivalrous times.

The chief poems which illustrate this French influence are the *Romaunt de la Rose*, a translation of a French original by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung; *The A B C*, a poem in honour of the Virgin; the *Court of Love*; *Chaucer's Dreme*; the *Complaynt to Pity*; and the *Dethe of the Duchesse Blanche* (1369), a lament on the death of John of Gaunt's wife. The Latin author followed by Chaucer for his love of the marvelous and his picturesqueness of treatment is Ovid.

Another literary influence sprang from his Italian travels in 1372 and 1378. He had more opportunity of studying

directly the work of the three great Italian masters of their art, who made the fourteenth century such a glorious epoch in Italian literature, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Through

Influence
of Italian
Poetry.

these great poets the new thought and new learning which, beginning in Italy, was soon to revolutionize the whole world of European thought, reached Chaucer, and produced a marked effect upon his later poetry. The first poem in which this influence can be distinctly traced is *Troilus and Cressid*, which is founded on Boccaccio's "Filostrato," and in the improved construction and the development of the story Chaucer shows that he had well studied Boccaccio as his model story-teller.

Palamon and Arcite, afterwards inserted as the Knight's Tale in the "Canterbury Tales," probably belongs to the same period, and shows the same improvement in construction and method of treatment on his early narrative work. *The Parliament of Fowles* (about 1381), again shows something of the influence of Boccaccio in treatment, though it returns to the French allegorical form of a dream, in which the poet hears Nature calling on all the birds to choose their mates on St. Valentine's Day. The eagle (probably typical of John of Gaunt) has to make his choice, and the other birds meet in "parliament" to give their opinions on the matter. The historical allusion may be to John of Gaunt's second marriage, or, more probably, to the marriage of Richard II. with Anne of Bohemia.

In the *House of Fame*, 1383, the influence of Dante is strong. Taking again the familiar form of a dream, the poet is borne in his sleep to the House of Fame built on a rock of ice, which is inscribed with the names of men once famous. People are flocking hither to demand recognition of the Goddess of Fame; some are denied good or evil fame, some have their names trumpeted forth by slander, some only ask to be forgotten. The poet refuses to petition for himself; Fame might do what she would with him, he should do his best and leave the rest. He is then carried on the wings of an eagle to the House of Rumour, which he finds crowded by pilgrims, shipmen, pardoners, and so on, who are each seeking to get importance attached to their own particular lies.

In the *Legend of Good Women*, 1384, the idea is again borrowed from Boccaccio. The poet falls asleep on a bright May morning, when he has been searching for a daisy. Alcestis appears to him, seeming with her golden hair and white robe like an embodiment of his favourite flower. The God of Love is angry with Chaucer because he has celebrated in his poems women faithless in love, such as Cresside. Alcestis obtains his pardon on condition that he will each year write a legend of some woman notable for her fidelity in love. With this ends the prologue, and then the legends of nineteen celebrated women (ending with the tale of Alcestis herself) were to follow. Nine only appear; the work is quite incomplete, and the stories are monotonous, but the prologue is a noble poem of chivalrous feeling and spirit.

The *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer's masterpiece, probably belongs to about the year 1387, but the tales which compose the whole were written at various times.

"*Canterbury Tales*," Some of the earliest, written before the scheme had matured in Chaucer's mind, are the Second 1387.

Nun's tale of St. Cecilia; the Clerk's tale, heard, Chaucer tells us, from Petrarch, who borrowed it from Boccaccio; the Man of Law's tale; and part of the Monk's. The plot, which is very simple, is given us in the prologue. The poet supposes himself to have met a company of twenty-

nine pilgrims who have come together at the Tabard Inn, preparatory to starting for the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. The pilgrims represent the whole of English society, from the Knight to the Ploughman, and each character is described with life-like vividness and humour. The host, Harry Baily, proposes that the way should be enlivened by the telling of stories; each pilgrim is to tell two on the way there and two on the way back; and the teller of the best story is to be entertained at supper at the cost of all the other pilgrims on their return to the Tabard. Of these stories only twenty-four are given, and Chaucer alone tells more than one tale, so that several pilgrims never have their say at all, and we do not know who won in the playful contest. The idea of the poem is borrowed from Boccaccio's "Decameron," in which some Florentine ladies and gentlemen of fashion retire during a time of plague to a garden outside the city walls, where they enliven their exile by telling each other stories. Chaucer's treatment, however, is very different from that of Boccaccio; he chooses men of all sorts and conditions, and unites them, not by a selfish aim, but by a common desire to do honour to the saint whom they all reverence.

In the prologue we have a wonderful picture of the various classes of society. We begin with the Knight, who,

"lovede chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye."

The Squire, his son, appears as the typical soldier of the rising generation, who adds to his warlike training some of the lighter accomplishments of life.

"Singing he was, or floytinge all the day.
* * * * *
He could songs make, and well endyte,
Juste and eek daunce, and wel purteye and write."

He is attended by a "Yeman," one of that sturdy class who did such service to England as her brave bowmen in many a fight. Of the religious orders we have the gentle Prioress, who

understands well all the refinements of social life, the Monk who has long ago discarded the strict rule of St. Benedict for an easy, selfish existence; and the Friar, who is quite at home in taverns and cottages, where he makes use of his office to get gain for himself. Connected, too, with the religious life of the day is the Pardoner, in whose character Chaucer satirizes the ever-increasing evil of indulgence-selling, and exposes much of the roguery and hypocrisy of this class; and the Sumpnour, whose office is to summon offenders before the ecclesiastical courts. In the "poore persoun of a town" Chaucer gives us his ideal parish priest, and we see that he has no quarrel with real religion, but only with the abuse of it. The learned professions are represented by the "Clerk of Oxenford," perhaps a picture of Chaucer himself; the Sergeant-at-Law; the Doctor of Physic; and the Maunciple or Caterer for the Inns of Court.

Of the agricultural classes, the Franklin is a picture of the typical English country gentleman, in whose hospitable house "it snowed" of meat and drink; the Reeve is steward to a rich man, and full of sharp practice for his own advantage; the Miller represents the class of small freeholders, becoming more important as the feudal system died out; and the Ploughman belongs, probably, to the better class of serf, rapidly gaining more independence in Chaucer's time.

The Merchant and Shipman illustrate trading-life of the time, while the Haberdasher, Tapicier, Weaver, and their companions, bring us in touch with the town life of the fourteenth century, with its flourishing guilds and signs of increasing prosperity.

Last, but not least, in this group of ordinary domestic life, we have the picture of the "Wife of Bath," sharp-witted in trade, ambitious of the first place among her neighbours, and not indifferent to the various artifices which were to render her attractive in the eyes of others.

In reading the "Canterbury Tales," with their inimitable prologue, in enjoying the author's genial humour, endless variety of description, and happy touches of character-life, we

are reminded of Dryden's comment on the whole, "It is sufficient to say, according to the proverb, '*Here is God's plenty.*'" Chaucer, as we have seen, was no inventor. Most of his stories have been used before by other writers, but in the treatment of his subject he has claim to originality. He puts new life, vigour, freshness, into whatever he touches; he had the genius which Coleridge tells us "always pays usurious interest in borrowing." As for his characters, they are drawn direct from life, and are types which we see around us every day. He is a great moral teacher, but his teaching is incidental, so that we hardly know that we are being taught. In Langland, on the contrary, the moral aim is always prominent. Chaucer is a satirist, but a genial one; he exposes follies and faults, makes us laugh at, as well as pity, his victims. There is no bitterness or intolerance in his view of life.

As regards metre, the "Legend of Good Women" and the "Canterbury Tales" were written in heroic couplets of ten-syllabled lines. For "The Parliament of Fowles," "Troilus

Chaucerian Metres.

and Cressid," "The Court of Love," and some others, he used the seven-lined stanza, often called Chaucerian, but oftener "rime royal," which was an adaptation of the French eight-lined stanza employed in romantic poetry. The ordinary Trouvère metre (couplets of eight-syllabled lines) appears in some poems as, "The Boke of the Duchesse" and "The House of Fame."

The fifteenth century is generally acknowledged to be the most barren in our literature. It has not given us one masterpiece, and very few names of distinction. It

Character- istics of Fifteenth Century.

lies between the bright promise of the fourteenth century and the glorious fulfilment of the sixteenth. The reasons of this barrenness are not far to seek. Literature flourishes best in times of internal peace. Periods of external warfare, when one strong feeling animates the nation, have often been productive of fine poetry, as, for instance, during the Napoleonic wars of the early nineteenth century; but civil strife and controversy, such as occupied a great part of the fifteenth

century (the Wars of the Roses), has usually a deadening effect on literature.

In the religious life of the time there was the same element of unrest. The *vox clamantis* of the few eager prophets of reform, such as Langland, Wyclif, and Gower, in the last century had swelled into an exceeding bitter cry, and the Lollards throughout the country were uplifting their voices against the existing state of things in Church, and often, also, in State. The controversial writings which have come down to us certainly proceed mainly from orthodox writers, but we gather from them clearly that there was much written also from the Lollards' point of view, but there was little on either side which would rank as true literature.

Social Unrest.

Feudalism was dying, though dying hard, and in their bewilderment at the change men had hardly yet learnt to use their newly-found freedom; their tongues seem, as it were, still fettered with long disuse. We shall see later how these various elements of unrest, which for a time appear to check the progress of our literature, were in reality helping to prepare the way for the grand future of the Tudor period. Without the religious and social discontent of the fifteenth century we should perhaps have had no Tyndale or Latimer and no Sir Thomas More.

Chaucer's influence is to be traced clearly in the chief writers of the early half of the century. *Thomas Occleve* owns Chaucer as his "maister dear" and "father reverent," in his touching little poem, the *Lament for Chaucer*. His chief

Occleve, 1370-1454.

poem, *The Governail of Princes*, is mainly a version of a Latin treatise, "*De Regimine Principum*." Occleve is of the orthodox party, and describes with approval the burning of a Lollard for heresy. Nevertheless, he speaks bravely against some of the corruptions of clerical life, and vigorously satirizes the extravagant costume of the day.

John Lydgate, also a contemporary of Chaucer and a warm admirer, was a monk of Bury St. Edmunds. He

was a prolific writer. His *Storie of Thebes* purported to be an additional "Canterbury Tale," and in Lydgate, c. 1451, descriptive power it shows the influence of Chaucer, but it lacks the master hand. *The Fall of Princes* treats of the tragic fate of sundry great men. The idea is borrowed from Boccaccio, and anticipates Sackville's "Mirror for Magistrates." The theme was a popular one just then, when men's minds were attracted in a time of troublous upheaval to the strange and tragic fate of many a great man. The *Troy Book* is mainly a translation of a French poem on the siege of Troy. Lydgate's minor poems are more interesting. In *The London Lickpeny* we have a graphic picture of the streets of London in his day. The simple countryman carries his suit to London, "where trouth in no wise should be faint"; but he finds that justice and mercy are only to be bought, and that in the crowded streets and inns he cannot get the simplest offices of kindness except in return for payment. He ends with the prayer:

"Now Jesus, that in Bethlehem was bore,
Save London, and send trewe lawyers their mede.
For whoso wants money with them shall not spede."

In *James I. of Scotland* we have undoubtedly the finest poet of the fifteenth century. Captured by the English at the age of eleven, when on his way to France, he spent nineteen years in captivity in England, mostly at Windsor. He was treated considerably by Henry V., who hoped to send him back to be a firm ally to England in his own land, and whose plans succeeded beyond his expectations, as James fell in love with the English King's cousin, Lady Joan Beaufort, and married her shortly before his release in 1424. His chief work, *The King's Quhair* (Book), is an allegory, Chaucerian in style and spirit, in which the poet laments his captivity and celebrates his love. It is written in six cantos of seven-lined stanzas (a measure much used by Chaucer and his imitators), and henceforth known as "rime royal." In this measure the first four lines

rhyme alternately, the fifth is a repetition of the fourth, and the sixth and seventh form a separate couplet (*a b a b b c c*).

The poet tells us of his first vision of the Lady Joan walking (like the "fayre Emelye" of Chaucer) in the gardens below

his prison window. When he loses sight of her
 "King's he is disconsolate, until a light flashes through
 Quhair." his prison, and he finds himself rising through

the spheres to the Court of Venus. Venus sends him to Minerva to learn wisdom in his love, and he is admonished to be patient, meek, and faithful, and to bide his time. He next visits Fortune, described with much allegorical force. She turns her wheel, and men rise and fall at her pleasure. Some, whose fall seems hopeless,

"(She) set them on again full safe and sound :
 And ever I saw a new swarm abound,
 That thought to climb upward upon the wheel,
 Instead of them that might no longer reel."

Just as Fortune would put him on her wheel he awakes, and, behold ! at his prison window is a dove sent by Venus, to bring him flowers, on the leaves of which are inscribed words of comfort and hope.

In the epilogue to the poem the young King declares that he is deeply indebted to Gower and Chaucer. The latter part of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth

Lowland century are marked in Scotland by the work
 Scotch of several poets of great merit. The Lowland
 Poetry. Scotch were a mixed race, sprung partly from the
 old Northumbrian and partly from the Celtic

race, and their poetry partook (in some measure) of the Celtic characteristics. Imaginative power, love of the picturesque and of Nature in her wilder aspects, together with a strong feeling of patriotism—these are the marked features of Lowland Scotch poetry of the period. The language directly descended from the Northumbrian dialect spoken by Bede, Cædmon, and Alcuin, reappears again in literature, after a silence of several centuries, in the fifteenth century, in the

patriotic war poems of *Barbour*, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, who celebrated the heroic deeds of the Bruce (c. 1375).

Blind Harry, the minstrel, resumes the same strain in the fifteenth century, taking for his hero William Wallace (c. 1461). *Henryson* (born before 1425) is an admirer and imitator of Chaucer. He shows keen observation and much sense of humour in some of his poetic versions of "Æsop's Fables." "The Uplandis Mous and the Burges Mous," a story which has been so often related in literature, has never been better told than by Henryson. Among the rustic poems in which he excelled, the *ballad of Robin and Makyn* is well known and much admired.

But greater names are those of Dunbar and Douglas. Though most of their work belongs to the sixteenth century, both of them belong to the school of Chaucer. *Dunbar* began life as a mendicant friar. He became a great favourite

Dunbar,
c. 1465-1530. with James IV., and was entrusted by him with several diplomatic missions to England and France. He is a keen satirist, witty, but coarse in his humour, and his allegorical power is undoubted. His *Dance of the Deadly Sins* shows great originality. *The Golden Targe*, an allegorical poem in which the shield of reason is exposed to the attacks of Love, and *The Thistle and the Rose* (1503), which celebrates the marriage of James IV. with Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII., are close imitations of Chaucer. Perhaps the finest thing *Dunbar* produced was his pathetic *Lament for the Makers* (1507).

Gavin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, commemorated by Scott in "Marmion" as a translator of Virgil, also produced two allegorical poems, *The Palace of Honour* and *King Hart*, both Chaucerian in spirit and execution.

Sir David Lyndsay, Lord Lyon King-at-Arms, was high in favour at the Court of James V. His works distinctly mark the transition from the poetry of the Middle Ages to the poetry of the Renaissance. He belongs to the Chaucerian school, and produces

many allegories; but in the tone and spirit of his satire the influence of the "New Learning," especially as regards the impulse it gave to theological reform, is distinctly to be traced. Lyndsay contributed greatly by his writings to the carrying out of the Reformation in Scotland. *The Dreme* (1528) and *The Complaint of the Papyngo* (Parrot), (1530), are bitter satires on the Court and the state of Scotland generally, and *The Three Estates*, an interlude, is a severe attack on the Church also. *The Monarchy* (1554) is a political dialogue between Experience and a Courtier.

In the fifteenth century prose writings begin to assume some importance. Poetry always precedes prose in the literary efforts of a nation. It is more easily remembered, an important point when writing is a difficult art and any form of printing unknown; the metrical form is also more suitable to the subject of the early literature of a people, which is always the expression of passionate feeling of some kind. When people begin to put into written form the ordinary events of life, the results of their experience, or the stories which they have heard from others, we get the use of prose.

The prose of the fifteenth century is not artistic, such as we get a little later in More, Latimer, and Ascham.

Sir Thomas Malory in 1469 completed his collection of Arthurian legends, taken from numerous French romances.

He called his work *Le Morte Darthur*, and it was one of the early books printed by Caxton (1485), and bearing the inscription: "Caxton me fieri fecit." Malory gives us much more than the title would imply. We have Arthur's mysterious origin, the story of how he proved himself the rightful King by alone being able to draw out and wield the magic sword. We hear of his rule, of his marriage with Guinevere, of the institution of the Round Table, with its "Siege perilous," of the quest of the Holy Grail, and the vision granted to Galahad alone, finally of the tragic ending of the King, mortally wounded in contest with

his faithless knights, and the last scene, when he is taken into the barge by the three Queens away from his sorrowing people, who still say, "King Arthur is not dead." There is written upon his tomb this verse: "Hic jacet Arthurus, rex quondam, rexque futurus"—"the King of old, the King to be."

The preface to Malory's "Morte Darthur" was written by *William Caxton*, who tells us there that he "set it in print that

all should take the good and honest acts in
Caxton, their remembrance and to follow the same."
c. 1422-1491.

Caxton not only conferred on us the greatest benefit in being the introducer of the art of printing by movable types, but he was also an author himself, and a most industrious translator. The first book which bears the words "Imprynted by me William Caxton at Westminster" is a translation of *The Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers*, from the French by Lord Rivers in 1477. *The Game and Play of Chesse*, translated from the French by Caxton himself in 1474, is often

quoted as the first book printed in England,
"Game and though it does not contain the same inscription.
Play of It is a moral treatise, divided into four tractates.
Chesse."

The first deals with the origin of the game, which arose, Caxton tells us, in the laudable desire of a certain philosopher to reform Evil Merodach, the tyrant King of Babylon. The King expressing interest in the game, "the philosopher began to teach him, and to show him the manner of the chessboard and the chessmen, and also the manners and the conditions of a King, of the nobles, and of the common people, and of their offices, and how they should be touched and drawn, and how he should amend himself and become virtuous." The King pressed the philosopher to tell him why he had "founden and made this playe," and in his answer we have some sterling advice for rulers: "I desire that thou have other government than thou hast had, and that thou have upon thyself first signory and mastery such as thou hast over others by force but not by right . . . for signory by force and will may not long endure." In the remaining tractates the comparison is worked out between the constitution of the

State and the chessboard, the chessmen standing for various degrees of men, and each move having its own moral.

The Recuyell of the Histories of Troye, also translated by Caxton, formed a collection of the stories which had for their subject the famous siege of Troy.

Among controversial writings, the one most worthy of note is *The Repressor of over-much Blaming of the Clergy*. Its author,

Pecock's
"Repres-
sor," 1449.

Reginald Pecock, was Bishop of Chichester, and a man of learning and judgment. He wrote in defence of the orthodox party against the attacks of Lollardism. He defended the use of images, pilgrimages, possession of land by the clergy, and the religious orders of friars and monks ; but he gave great offence to his own side by the way in which he endeavoured to appeal to the reason of his opponents, instead of treating their objections as below contempt. By later generations of readers he has been looked upon as a writer as much in favour of reformation in religion as against it. He was attacked on all sides, deprived of his see, his books publicly burnt, and he himself ordered into exile at Thorney Abbey, where he died in 1459.

An interesting series of family letters was written by and to various members of the *Paston family* between the years 1422 and 1509. The village of Paston is in Norfolk, near Cromer, and the letters which

The Paston
Letters.

give the record of the chief family of the village are full of allusions of interest to the life of the time. Many of them concern a certain John Paston, of the troublous times of the Wars of the Roses, and Dame Margaret Paston, his capable wife, who managed his estates during his absence, and brought up his children with a firm and loving hand. Preserved amongst this collection is a letter from the unfortunate Duke of Suffolk, murdered in 1450, to his little son, in which he warns the child against some of the temptations into which he himself had fallen.

As some of the best-known ballads appear to have passed into written form probably during the latter half of the fifteenth century, this would seem a good place to speak of

the origin and construction of the ballad. The ballad belongs to the earliest form of spoken literature, and, from the derivation of its name from Old French *baller*, means a song sung to the rhythmic movement of a chorus. In England we have got to apply the name to a song that is on the lips of the people. The German *Volkslied* expresses the idea exactly, but there is no doubt that the ballad originated in the primitive custom of a dance, accompanied by the singing of the dancers.

Ballad Poetry.

Ballad poetry has some very special characteristics of its own. It is a "floating" literature, not permanently fixed by writing. The same story is continually re-appearing in a slightly different version, as it was recast by the fancy of the reciter to suit his audience and his occasion. Then, it is a literature which belongs to no individual authors; it is the possession and common property of the body of minstrels who formed such an important feature in the life of the Middle Ages.

Characteristics.

Nor can we trace the stories which formed their theme to any particular people. Like the nursery tales of our youth, the ballads of the Middle Ages are the inheritance of all European nations; and it is as impossible to trace their origin and authorship as it would be to do the same in the case of "Cinderella" or the "Sleeping Beauty."

The term "minstrel" was a comprehensive one, including the poet, singer, musician, reciter, and story-teller. The minstrels were probably very seldom the authors of the songs with which they delighted the people of all classes and ranks, in the Baron's hall after the banquet, on the village green at a merry-making, or from the town-cross in the market-place. And the people learnt them, and handed them on, father to son, as a precious inheritance.

Rise of Ballad-mongers.

As writing, and then the new art of printing, extended to all forms of literature, and as the picturesque figure of the minstrel disappeared gradually from out of our English life, we get the rise of a new class, the ballad-mongers. We hear of them

first in Elizabeth's reign, and they are of a very inferior order to the minstrels. Severe enactments are passed against "harpers, pipers, rhymers, crowders, and such-like," and they are classed among lawless people and vagrants.

The ballad-monger's work at its best is very inferior to the older production of the minstrel. It is the work of the imitator, who introduces moral teaching in a forced manner, and often writes down to the tastes of the people. He no longer moves, as the minstrel did, among the higher and more cultured classes. Then, his ballad was printed, and all its faults and imperfections stamped for ever in the popular broadsheet. It is thought by many that the minstrel's work was aided very materially by the better-educated ladies in the great houses, who, hearing the legends and love-stories from their servants, put them into verse to wile away some of their long days of forced inaction.

The subjects of the ballads are very various; a large number relate to war, clan-feuds, "border-raids"; another important group tell of life in the "merry greenwood," and collect around the interesting personality of Robin Hood; and then there are the ballads of homely life, the often-told tale of faithful or unrequited love, the differences between poor and rich, as in "The Beggar-maid and King Cophetua."

Two well-known and highly typical ballads belong to the fifteenth century, *Chevy Chase* and *The Nut-brown Maid*.

"Chevy Chase" belongs to the group of war-ballads. The earliest written form was most likely dictated by a certain Richard Sheale, a ballad-singer of Queen Elizabeth's reign, who had recited the ballad over and over again, but was not its author. It is a fine heroic song, and has had noble tribute borne to its merits. "I never hear the old song of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style," writes Sir Philip Sidney in his "Defence of Poesie"; and Addison has devoted two essays to its praises.

The title means "The Hunting on the Cheviot," and it deals with a border-fight between the two warlike families of Douglas and Percy. It is impossible to identify the particular fight, but that the author was an Englishman is clear from such a passage as the following :

[The combat has ended with the death of both leaders, and the news is brought to James of Scotland.]

"He sayde, Alas and woe is me !
Such another captain Scotland within,
He saith, y-faith shall never be ;"

but the same news conveyed to the "fourth Harry our King" is thus received :

"I have a hundred captayns in England, he sayde,
As good as ever was he !"

In *The Nut-brown Mayde* we have a ballad
"The Nut-brown Mayde." of a different type, a pathetic tale of faithful love put to a cruel test, and finally rewarded.

A marked characteristic of ballad poetry, reminding us of its rhythmical origin, is the repetition of the same thought in nearly identical words, so as to act almost as the burden of a song. This is well illustrated in the ballad of "The Nut-brown Mayde":

For in my mind, of all mankind,
I love but you alone."

And again :

"For I must to the greenwood go,
Alone, a banished man !"

The dramatic element, strong in the ballad, as in all popular poetry, comes out in "Chevy Chase"; the straightforward narrative is constantly interrupted by the dialogue of the chief characters, as, for instance, where the two leaders bid one another defiance to the death ; or, again, where the two Kings receive in their turn the news of the combat and its

result. In "The Nut-brown Mayde" also, after a short introduction by the author, the ballad takes the form of a dialogue between the two lovers in alternate stanzas.

In ballads we find the only poetry of the great body of the people, for the songs of a country are the truly natural part of its poetry.

PERIOD III

RENAISSANCE TO SPENSER

The Renaissance—More's "Utopia"—Tyndale—Latimer—Ascham—Skelton—New forms of poetry (blank verse, sonnet)—Sackville—Translators.

THE great Revival of Learning, or Renaissance (a movement in favour of learning and freedom of thought), had an almost

untold influence on literature. Though England was not much directly affected by the movement until nearly the close of the fifteenth century, there had been signs of the new life for some time, as travellers and pilgrims brought home from the East some knowledge of the new ideas. Constantinople had long been the home of a great number of learned Greeks and Jews ; the advance of the Turks drove them gradually westward, and the taking of Constantinople in 1453 finally dispersed them. Italy, and especially Florence, then under the patronage of the Medici family, became the home of many, and consequently attracted a large number of scholars from every European country. These, returning, taught the New Learning in their own Universities, and the invention of printing occurring about the same time, copies were made of the Greek MSS., and the knowledge of Greek literature spread throughout Europe. Such scholars in England were Colet, Grocyn, Linacre, men who reflected all that was best and noblest in the great Renaissance. Every day brought the scholar some new treasure of wisdom, just as to the adventurer and discoverer new vistas were continually opening.

In 1491 *Grocyn* introduced the study of Greek at Oxford, and from that time onwards the influence of Greek thought, imagination and artistic skill is clearly to be traced in English literature. The effect was not merely to increase knowledge: it was much more than this; it aroused and deepened thought.

Oxford became the centre of the New Learning in England. *Erasmus*, the great Dutch scholar, who came to Oxford in 1498 to study Greek, speaks thus of the little band of kindred spirits who gathered around him there: "When I hear my friend Colet, it is like listening to Plato himself. In *Grocyn*, who does not admire the wide range of his learning? What could be more searching, deep, and refined, than the judgment of *Linacre*? And when did Nature ever mould a character more gentle, endearing, and refined than Sir Thomas More?" The same spirit may be seen in all these men—earnest desire to search out the truth, to reform what was wrong in Church or State, and to leave their generation better than they found it.

With *Colet* (Dean of St. Paul's in 1505) we see the result of this spirit in his efforts to reform the middle-class English education, to set it on a sound religious basis, and we have the establishment of St. Paul's, and of many grammar-schools throughout the country.

But the name which connects the Revival of Learning most closely with the history of English literature is *Sir Thomas More's*.

More's life, which belongs to history, may be briefly summed up. He was born in London in 1480, and was early taken into the household of Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, where he attracted the attention of all by his intelligence and the charm of his personality. He was sent to Oxford, and became there the friend of Colet, Erasmus, Linacre, and Grocyn. He was educated for the Bar, early entered Parliament, and after holding various important offices was appointed Lord Chancellor in 1529. He continued to hold this

More,
1478-1535.

office until May, 1532, when he resigned on the passing of the Act of Supremacy. In spite of the warm affection shown by Henry VIII. for him during the early years of his Ministerial life, the vengeance of the King now fell on him for his opposition to the Acts which finally separated the Church of England from Roman authority. He was accused of high treason, and executed 1535. His earliest works seem to have been poems; then in 1509 we have the first attempt at serious history-writing in his *History of Edward V. and Richard III.*

It is in *Utopia*, however, that we see first the practical effect of the New Learning on More's mind—as he turned it to all subjects, social and political. It is a “*Utopia*,” 1516. wonderful work, not only in its grasp of the evils of the time, but in its anticipations of reforms, many of which have only been realized in our own time, some of which, unfortunately, still remain a dream of the future. The “*Utopia*” was written in Latin in 1516, and not translated until after More's death. It is written in two books, and claims to be founded on the adventures in travel of a certain Raphael Hythlodaye, met by More on one of his diplomatic missions at the house of Peter Giles in Antwerp.

Book I. begins with the first meeting of More and the traveller, who gives some account of his experiences in other lands, and specially dwells on his visit to England, where he had been entertained by Cardinal Morton, More's former patron. The conversation turned upon English law and justice, a certain “layman cunning in the laws of the Realm” being inclined to praise warmly the stern and rigorous laws then in force against thieves. Hythlodaye objects, and shows that the severe penalties dealt forth are out of all proportion to the offence, and even offer encouragement to murder, as death was generally the penalty for both. He then examines the means by which the number of thieves might be reduced, better education extended to the needy classes, employment provided by the State for

disbanded soldiers, disabled men, or retainers discarded at the selfish will of their employers, and, above all, that the land should be cultivated chiefly with a view to the interests of the labourers, and not converted into vast tracts of pasture-land for the benefit of the few. This and the enclosure of common land were among the burning questions of the day. As to the treatment of the convicted thieves, Hythlodaye lays down the great principle that the right end of all punishment is that it should be remedial. The thieves are to become common labourers, dependent on the State for support, treated with humanity, and encouraged in habits of industry, and finally able to retain their freedom by good behaviour and hard work. How many centuries it has taken us to realize in any measure this ideal of More's in our schemes for prison organization! Cardinal Morton is much struck by these arguments, and thinks it would be well if Kings could have at their Courts philosophers to advise, to which Hythlodaye rejoins that many philosophers have instructed Kings through their writings, but unless Kings would apply their minds to the study all was in vain. What would be the result, he asks, if at that moment he were to counsel the King of France to abandon his plans for the subjection of Naples or Venice? Again More uplifts his voice against an evil of the time—aggressive warfare.

Hythlodaye has many times quoted from Plato's "Republic," and also alluded to the customs of the "Utopians," whose country he has visited on his travels. His hearers now beg him to tell them something of the "weal publique" of Utopia, and the second part of the book opens with a description of the ideal state, Utopia, or "Nowhere," in which we see a touch of More's gentle humour.

The position, shape, and size of the island having been described, there follows a more detailed account of the capital town, Amaurote, as typical of all the fifty-four cities on the island. Like London, it is in a favoured position, on the banks of a noble river; but, unlike the London of More's day, it is well built, well drained, well lighted, provided

with plenty of fresh water, and each house is possessed of a good garden.

In the country all live in large farm communities of about forty people, from which every year twenty are chosen out to change places with as many townspeople. Thus the towns are not overcrowded, and the country is never left depopulated.

The government of the island is in the hands of officers called Philarchs, and a King, who holds his office for life, unless he be "deposed or put down for suspicion of tyranny." In matters which concern the common good of all the counsel of the whole island is invited through their representatives.

All (men and women alike) must learn some craft by which they may maintain themselves.

Idle people alone find no encouragement in Utopia, and, if incorrigible, they are classed with criminals, treated as bondmen, and put to forced labour. No one in Utopia is obliged to work more than six hours in the day; the rest of the time is divided between healthy recreation, physical and intellectual, and sports, but no pleasure is taken in such as give pain and sacrifice life. Meals are served in large halls and eaten in common, thus economizing time and labour.

The sick are cared for, and tenderly nursed in hospitals provided for the purpose.

Writing in an age famed for its luxury and extravagance of living, when the King's Ministers wore fortunes upon their backs, and such exhibitions as the Field of the Cloth of Gold were to be witnessed, More lays great stress on the simplicity of life in his model State. The Utopian children were brought up to despise wealth; they were given diamonds and pearls as baubles, and taught to discard them as they grew older; all the meanest vessels of their household were made of gold and silver, and their bondmen were decorated with gold chains, earrings, and adornments of all sorts.

Aggressive warfare the Utopians looked on as rather the

occupation of a beast than a man, and only took up their arms to defend their own land or to deliver the oppressed.

Their religion was characterized by toleration. They worshipped one God, and gladly received from Hythlodaye knowledge of Christ and His teaching. The atheists of the community are not persecuted, but they are counted unfit to rule others if they acknowledge no rule above themselves.

More ends with the rather sad confession that "many things be in the weal publique which in our cities I may rather wish for than hope after."

It seems strange that, with such noble ideas on religious toleration, More should ever have embarked on hot religious controversy and pamphlet-writing; but such was the case.

More, anxious as he was for reform from within, could see none in separation from Roman authority, and the very loyalty of his nature made him cling tenaciously to the traditions of the past. His arguments are chiefly directed against those put forward by William Tyndale, and two of the most famous of the pamphlets are: *The Dialogue concerning Heresies*, written in 1528, and the *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, in 1532.

Tyndale, *William Tyndale*, his chief opponent, may also be considered to a great extent a product of the Renaissance. The study of the original Greek, to which such an impetus was given by the Revival, made men's minds go back more and more to what Christ and His Apostles taught, and thus they became more and more impressed by the corruption of the clergy and the necessity for reform; and there were many who, like Tyndale, Coverdale, and Latimer, saw no hope for the desired result except in breaking off all connection with Rome.

Tyndale's great work, the complete *Translation of the New Testament*, was carried out chiefly abroad, and smuggled into England in 1526. Its appearance roused the hot controversy to which we have just alluded. Tyndale had to go into exile in 1536, to Germany, where with his faithful disciple, Miles

Coverdale, he worked at the Translation of the Old Testament, to be finally completed by Coverdale after his master's execution as a heretic at Antwerp in 1536.

Hugh Latimer, another outspoken advocate of the reformed faith, won the King's notice by his fearlessness and wit, and, as Bishop of Worcester, was for some time the

Latimer, only Bishop who supported the Reformation.
c. 1470-1555.

In 1539 he was deprived of his see and put into prison for refusing to subscribe to the Act of Six Articles, but on the King's death was released, and resumed his preaching at St. Paul's Cross, where he often had among his audience the young King Edward VI. and the Princess Elizabeth. He was condemned for his heretical opinions during the persecutions of Mary's reign, and suffered at the stake in 1555. He has left behind him forty-five written sermons, full of homely phrases, lively tales, and pointed allusions to the abuses of the time, especially the abuses in clerical life. He never spares his brethren; sometimes he will stir them up to greater exertion by the example of the "most diligent prelate in all England"—the devil; sometimes he reproves a common abuse by ridicule, as, for instance, when he rebukes clerical non-residence in the tale of the "bell that lacked a clapper these twenty years." Always he is vigorous, fearless, and true, and the very roughness of manner and expression becomes sublime, because the man himself was so great. The best known of Latimer's sermons are, "Seven Sermons on the Lord's Prayer" and the "Sermon on the Ploughers."

To *Cranmer* (died 1556) we owe, to a great extent, our *English Prayer-Book*, and the *Translation of the Bible* which goes by his name. It was the first to be read in English during the Church Service.

In *Roger Ascham* we see the rise of artistic prose. His writings are a great contrast to Latimer's in their refined, scholarly, and almost pedantic correctness.

Ascham, Ascham was Latin tutor to Edward VI. and
1515-1568. the Princess Elizabeth, and is not unnaturally

proud of the proficiency of the latter: "Beside her perfit

readiness in Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish, she readeth more Greek every day than some Prebendarie of this Church doth read Latin in a whole week. And that which is most praiseworthy of all, within the wall of her privy chamber she hath obtained that excellency of learning to understand, speak, and write, both wittily with the head and fair with the hand as scarce one or two rare wits in both the Universities have in my years reached unto."

Ascham's first work, *Toxophilus*, was written in the form of a dialogue between Philologus (the lover of learning) and Toxophilus (the lover of shooting). Shooting is advocated as good exercise for the scholar's health, and practically useful to cultivate as a means of defence. Ascham regrets that archery is so little practised among the youth of England, and advises that encouragement of every kind should be given to a revival of the art.

The Scholemaster, for which Ascham's name is chiefly remembered, was not published until 1570, two years after his death.

"The
Schole-
master,"
1570.

He tells us himself in the preface the circumstances which led to its composition. At a dinner-party at Sir William Cecil's in 1563 (at which Ascham was present) the conversation turned on the education and discipline of boys' schools. Some boys at Eton had lately run away to escape severe punishment. Some of the guests approved of severe corporal punishment; boys could not be managed or controlled without it. Ascham ventured to differ: "children were sooner allured by love than driven by beating." Sir Richard Sackville bore witness to the same. "Many young wits be driven to hate learning before they know what learning is. I can be good witness to this myself, for a fond schoolmaster, before I was fully fourteen years old, drave me with fear of beating from all love of learning."

Ascham is asked to put into "some order of writing the chief points of this our talk concerning the right order of teaching and honesty of living for the good bringing up of children and young men." These are, then, the three chief

points brought out in this earliest of our English treatises on education—"truth of religion, honesty in living, and right order in teaching." The schoolmaster's charge is not a long one; it should supplement and not in any way replace the good home training of the parent, and as to the University training, to which Ascham concludes his pupils will be going, "if the ideal schoolmaster teach him somewhat that may serve him seven year after in University, he doth his scholar no more wrong . . . than he doth in London, who selling silk or cloth to his friend doth give him better measure than either his promise or bargain was."

Ascham describes the teachable child as "Euphues" (of ready wit), ready both in body and mind. His favourite maxim, that love is a more powerful agent than fear, is illustrated by his well-known conversation with Lady Jane Grey, in which she confesses that the gentleness of her schoolmaster had allured her to find her greatest pleasure in learning, while the severity of her parents had given her a distaste for all other occupations. Ascham strongly condemns the growing custom of sending English youths to finish their education in Italy. He looks on it as the land of Circe, from which none returned in his natural shape. "The Italianised Englishman is the devil incarnate." Two facts strike us forcibly in reading "The Scholemaster"—one, how much the man is in advance of his time; and the other, how strange it is that his principles of education should have been so long neglected.

The prevailing desire for reform, whether religious, social, or educational, is not confined to the prose-writers of the period.

John Skelton, a poet of very versatile gifts, draws a graphic picture of the clergy of his day in *Colin Clout*. A simple

English rustic, Colin Clout, is annoyed at the complaints brought by the laity of the greed, ignorance, and tyranny of their clergy. He suggests remedies for these evils, and especially dwells on the influence which "preaching prelates" would exercise on

Skelton,
1460-1528.

the minds of the country folk. In *Speke Parrot* and *Why come ye not to Court?* the whole force of Skelton's satire is concentrated on Cardinal Wolsey as representative to his mind of all the clerical vices against which he has been inveighing. In *The Bowge of Court* the follies and vices of Court life are satirized under allegorical form. Every phase of life, high and low, is familiar to Skelton, and he paints each scene vividly, whether it is the haughty Cardinal ruling the Court with his insolent humours, the rustics at the village ale-house, with their coarse conviviality (*The Tunning of Eleanor Rumnyng*), or the little convent-bred girl with her sampler and her pet bird (*Phyllyp Sparrow*).

The influence of the Revival of Learning is shown in the introduction of new poetical forms from Italy. *The Earl of Surrey* (1517-1547), son of the Duke of Norfolk, **New Forms of Poetry.** was a man of learning and refinement who fell under the vengeance of Henry VIII., and was executed in 1547. His writings are polished and refined, and contrast with the rude, vigorous verse of Skelton. They may be divided into translations and original sonnets. In his translation of the "*Æneid*," Surrey for the first time uses "blank verse," which was soon to become the distinctive English metre for all long poems, and for dramatic poetry specially. The ordinary line of blank verse (heroic unrhymed verse, or pentameter) has five poetical feet or ten syllables to the line; each foot has its two syllables, in which the accent is generally on the second syllable. Such a poetical foot is called an iambus; while a foot in which the chief stress lies on the first syllable is known as a trochee. Trochaic feet are introduced sparingly into most long English poems written in blank verse. The following example of regular blank verse, iambic pentameter, is from Surrey's translation of Virgil:

"With this the skie gan whirl about the sphere,
The cloudy night gan thicken from the sea,
With mantells spread that cloked earth and skies,
And eke the treason of the Grekish guile."

Surrey's sonnets, many of them translations of Petrarch, a few only original, are natural and graceful, and his verse is always melodious.

To *Sir Thomas Wyatt* is attributed the introduction of the sonnet into England. He shows great power in his satires; one of these, *On the Sure and Mean Estate*, draws its moral from the well-worn story of "The Town and Country Mouse." His sonnets are not so sweet or musical as Surrey's, but they are more correctly modelled on the Italian.

A *sonnet* is a short poem or song, of which the main theme is love. It had been well known in Italy since

Construc-
tion of the
Sonnet.

the fourteenth century, when Petrarch wrote his famous sonnets to "Laura," and was probably introduced quite a century earlier. The correct sonnet follows a regular form of construction; it consists of fourteen lines, which divide into two quatrains, or verses of four lines each, and two tercettes, or verses of three lines each. In the two quatrains the first and fourth, second and third, lines rhyme together; in the two tercettes the rule is not so rigorous: three rhymes are required, sometimes the rhyme is alternate. The most exact Italian model runs thus: *a b b a, a b b a, c d e, c d e*.

The subject is introduced in the two quatrains; it increases in energy and vigour as the poem goes on, until the climax is reached in the last lines. The following is an example of a regular sonnet. William Drummond, of Hawthornden, is the writer.

"IN PRAISE OF A SOLITARY LIFE.

"Thrice happy he who by some shady grove,
Far from the clam'rous world, doth live his own;
Though solitary, who is not alone,
But doth converse with that eternal love;
O how more sweet is birds' harmonious moan,
Or the hoarse sobbings of the widow'd dove,
Than those smooth whisperings near a Prince's throne
Which good make doubtful, do the evil approve!

O how more sweet is zephyr's wholesome breath,
 And signs embalmed which new-born flowers unfold,
 Than that applause vain honour doth bequeath !
 How sweet are streams to poison drunk in gold !
 The world is full of horrors, troubles, slights ;
 Woods, harmless shades have only true delights."

Spenser and Sidney wrote many sonnets, more or less following this model.

Shakespeare used a form of his own: three four-lined verses, with alternate rhyme, end in a couplet. In the use of alternate rhyme for the first eight lines he was not without a model, as the earliest-known sonnet in Italian, by Peter de Vineia, in the thirteenth century, made use of this arrangement, as did also Petrarch in some of his early sonnets. The final couplet is also, though rarely, used in the Italian sonnet. Some of the most beautiful sonnets in our language have been written in the Shakespearean form.

Another poet much influenced by the spirit of Italian poetry is *Thomas Sackville*, Lord Buckhurst and Earl of Dorset, who was made Lord Treasurer on the death of *Burleigh*, and held the office till his death in 1608. He was the author of the first English Tragedy, *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex*, and he planned a collection of narratives by several poets on the misfortunes of the great men of English history. To this collection, entitled *The Mirror for Magistrates*, he contributed the poetical preface, *The Induction*, and one narrative, *The Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham*. "The Induction" is a very remarkable poem, full of vigour and allegorical force. In subject it reminds us of *Lydgate's* "Falls of Princes"; in dignity of treatment it is a foretaste of *Spenser's* "Faerie Queene." But, above all, we see the distinct trace of *Dante's* influence on the poet's mind. The poet imagines himself led by Sorrow, as *Dante* was by *Virgil*, through the infernal regions, where he recognises many of the unfortunate heroes of history, and is confronted by such figures as *Remorse*, *Misery*, *Old Age*, *Famine*, *Death*.

Sorrow is thus forcibly described :

“ Her body small, forwithered and forespent,
As is the stalke that sommers drought opprest,
Her wealked face with woful teares besprent,
Her colour pale, and (as it seemed her best)
In woe and playnt reposed was her rest.
And as the stone that droppes of water weares,
So dented were her cheekes with fall of teares !”

Sackville's own two contributions were far the best in the collection.

In 1557 appeared the earliest English poetical miscellany, published by *Richard Tottel*. The songs and sonnets of Surrey and Wyatt were first published in *Tottel's Miscellany*. The idea of poetical collections became popular, and the following were issued in quick succession: *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576), *The Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578), *A Handeful of Pleasant Devices* (1584), and *England's Helicon* (1600); the latter had as contributors Sidney, Raleigh, Lodge, Greene, Marlowe, and Shakespeare. In 1566 a prose collection of tales, translated from the Italian, was made by *Arthur Brooke*, and it is this Shakespeare evidently used for many of the romantic stories which formed the basis of his plays.

It is natural that an age so strongly influenced by the study of the classics should have produced a large number of translators. The “*Æneid*” was translated by *Thomas Phaer* in 1558, Ovid's “*Metamorphoses*” by *Arthur Golding* in 1567, and Seneca's plays by *Thomas Heywood* about 1561. The Italian poets, too, were freely translated. *Sir John Harrington* translated Ariosto in 1591, and *Edward Fairfax* Tasso in 1600.

Industrious translators from the Hebrew were *Sternhold* and *Hopkins* and *Thomas Norton*.

The Protestant divines (Foxe, Bale, and others), many of them returning from their exile at Geneva during Mary's reign, with their Protestantism not a little tinged with Calvinism, produced that translation of the Bible known as the *Geneva Bible* in 1560, and this was followed in 1568 by

the *Bishop's Bible*, which represented the views of the more moderate party in the Church of England.

The controversy which was soon to rage fiercely between the extreme Puritans, who felt the work of the Reformation in the English Church to be quite incomplete, and those who, on the other hand, had no desire for further reform, showed itself in the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign in the works of such men as *John Foxe*, whose vivid description of the sufferings of the martyrs of the Marian persecution in his famous *Book of Martyrs* (1563) had a profound influence on the minds of his countrymen ; and in the calm, scholarly work of *Jewel*, Bishop of Salisbury, in his *Apology for the English Church*.

Later the controversy took the form of a fierce pamphlet war, known as the "Martin Marprelate" Controversy, from the assumed name signed to some of the ablest pamphlets on the Puritan side.

We have tried to group together, as far as possible, the chief works which show the direct influence of the Renaissance, whether it be in revived interest in the past and renewed study of its literature, or in the freedom of thought which made men discontented with any sort of slavery in Church or State, or, again, in the admiration of the poetry of other nations, which led to the introduction of new forms. Meanwhile, original power was growing, and we must now turn to the name around which centres all the glory of the Elizabethan period—Spenser.

PERIOD IV

ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE: POETRY AND PROSE

Characteristics of Elizabethan Age—Poets : Gascoigne, Spenser—Prose : Lyly, Sidney—Theology and philosophy : Hooker, Bacon—Later historians—Translators.

ONE marked characteristic of the literature of the Elizabethan period is the great variety of its form ; poetry, romances, travels, histories, theological and philosophical treatises, and, above all, plays, are all to be found in abundance within this “Golden Age,” of our literature. It is almost impossible to classify the works unless we consider them apart from the men who wrote them, as we should find in each group the same author reappearing. It is also impossible in such a prolific age to do more than take a few of the real leaders who made its chief glory.

Elizabeth's reign came after the tyranny and gloom of the past, like a sudden outburst of spring after an unusually prolonged spell of stormy and uncertain weather. No wonder that every bush was full of singing birds, carolling forth their songs with full-throated glee.

Men's minds and thoughts had long been gaining independence and breadth, their imaginative powers had been developing too, side by side with increased facility for handling their own tongue artistically ; and now we have added Patriotism. an object for which to work, on which to expend their devotion, their own country. Thus we have that wonderful outburst of patriotic feeling which influenced so strongly the writers of this period. England was prosperous

and happy, in spite of dangers from within and without, under a Queen who, with all her failings, certainly won her people's hearts and loved them well. Much of the passionate devotion expressed for the great Queen was expended upon her as the representative of their dearly-loved native land.

In *George Gascoigne* we find a good example of versatility as a prose-writer, translator, dramatist, lyricist and satirist. His ablest work is *The Steel Glas*, a vigorous poem, Gascoigne, in which he satirizes with some force various 1525-1577. estates of men. The "Glas" is a mirror in which he sees reflected the weaknesses of mankind. The priests are not to cease their prayers until all men treat others as they would themselves be treated.

"Even then, my priests, may you make holyday,
And pray no more but ordinary prayers."

And the poet, not unmindful of the dangers which beset those who pass judgment on others, ends with the plaintive words :

"And pray for me, that, since my hap is such
To see men so, I may perceive myself."

The "Steel Glas" was one of the first long poems to adopt "blank verse" as its metre.

Edmund Spenser was born in 1552, in London, his most kindly nurse, but came probably of a North-Country stock. He was educated at Merchant Taylors' School, and then at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. We know little of his University career, but two firm friendships, at any rate, were formed there with Gabriel Harvey, a man of literary taste, but something of a pedant, and with Edmund Kirke, who became a warm admirer of Spenser's genius, and one of the first to call attention to the merits of "our new poet," as he termed him.

Leaving college in 1576, he spent some time in the North, where he met and wooed in vain a lady who figured in his poems as "Rosalind." In 1578 he was received into the household of Lord Leicester, and made the acquaintance of Philip Sidney, the "true mirror of knighthood," the original of much that is noblest and best in Spenser's pictures of

chivalric life. Spenser probably visited Sidney at his beautiful home at Penshurst. In 1579 appeared his first great poem,

The Shepherdes Calendar, the title being borrowed from old books (something like the "The Shepherdes Calendar," modern popular almanac), containing a medley

of astrological predictions, useful receipts, pithy sayings and moral reflections. The work was dedicated to Sidney, signed "E. K.," and has a dedicatory epistle and an explanatory glosse, written by Edmund Kirke. The poem consists of twelve parts, termed eclogues (an eclogue is a goatherd's song), each assigned to one month of the year, and all differing in metre, subject and character. It belongs to the class of poetry known as "pastoral poetry," a form descended from the Latin "bucolic," through the Italian model, and thence introduced, at the Renaissance into England, where it had become very popular. It dealt especially with the life of shepherds and shepherdesses; the whole world is turned for the time being into the world of rural life, though the topics dealt with are often not those which would interest or affect deeply the rural mind. The "pastoral" is essentially un-English; there is an unreality and affectation about the form which is certainly not national, and the shepherds and shepherdesses who pipe to their gentle flocks of their love troubles, or discourse to one another on the religious questions of the day, are as truly typical English peasants of any century as are the pretty figures depicted on Dresden china. Still, there seems to have been a special charm for some readers in the busy, restless, sixteenth century, in these pictures of calm, tranquil life in some impossible Arcadia. The eleventh eclogue of the "Shepherdes Calendar" is considered the finest. It is a lament on the death of some unknown lady of rank, Dido, represented, of course, as a kind of Queen among the Shepherds. It is the earliest of our fine elegies, and should be read and compared with Milton's "Lycidas" and Keats' "Adonais."

"Unwise or wretched we to weet what's good or ill,
We deeme of Death as doome of ill desert;
But knewe we fools what it us brings until,
Die would we daily once it to expert."

Though choosing an artificial form, Spenser rises above the artificiality in his best work even in this early poem, and shows that his aim is to get back to Nature and true life.

The work at once secured to him a high place among the poets of the day, and would probably have gained him a permanent place at Court under the patronage of Leicester. But in 1580 he was offered new work, the circumstances of which coloured the rest of his life and gave special characteristics to his great poem, the "Faerie Queene." Lord Grey of Wilton, being appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland, chose Spenser as his secretary, and the poet passed from the brilliant Court of Elizabeth, from the comparatively peaceful and civilized England, to a land where no rule or order, no intellectual life, no unity existed, except such as showed itself from time to time in combinations against the English rulers. Lord Grey, described by Spenser as "temperate, just, sincere, and right noble," put down the Irish rebellions of 1580-82 with the most unrelenting severity, and many must have been the terrible scenes of misery and bloodshed witnessed by the poet. He himself wrote later the account of these sad times in his prose pamphlet, *View of the Present State of Ireland*. He never blames Grey's policy in the least, and shows himself strongly confirmed in hatred of the Irish race and of Roman Catholicism, to which he attributes much of the evil condition of the people. It was in Ireland that Spenser made the acquaintance of Sir Walter Raleigh, most active in public business in Ireland, in which Spenser had also been employed. In 1586 Spenser was rewarded for his exertions in bringing about a settlement of the property of the distracted country by the gift of Kilcolman Castle, part of the forfeited property of the Earl of Desmond. It was situated in a dreary tract of country, and we can distinctly trace the desolate scenery of the region, the barren wastes and woods given over to the "wild beast, the outlaw, and the ruffian," the decay and misery of a country torn for centuries by civil strife, in the world in which he places his knights-errant, ladies fair and ruthless monsters. On the death of Sidney, Spenser

wrote his "Astrophel"; but the poem was hardly worthy of the occasion, and he treated the subject more nobly a few years later in "The Ruins of Time."

In the summer of 1589 Raleigh visited Kilcolman, and Spenser read to him the three first books of the *Faerie Queene*. Later in the year the poet visited England, taking his great poem for publication. On his return in 1591 he commemorates this visit, and shows the impression made on him by the brilliant scene at Elizabeth's Court in his poem, *Colin Clout's come Home again*.

To 1591 belong a collection of poems, *The Complaints*, of which the finest are *The Ruins of Time* and *Prosopopoia, or Mother Hubbard's Tale*. The latter, written in the form of a fable and in Chaucerian style and metre, satirizes, under the adventures of the fox and ape, many evils in the social and religious life of the day. In the picture of the Court to which he introduces us, we see that Spenser was not wholly dazzled by its outward brilliancy, that he recognised, also, some of the evils of hypocrisy, flattery, and injustice which there existed. In his praise of the true courtier we again find a picture of Sidney.

A series of sonnets dealing with his courtship, *The Amoretti*, and ending with the noblest of marriage-hymns, *The Epithalamium*, belong to this period of his life, and were published about 1595.

In 1596 he again visited England, and arranged for the publication of three more books of the "Faerie Queene." During this English stay he wrote the *Hymns to Heavenly Love and Heavenly Beauty* and *Prothalamion*, to celebrate the marriages of the two daughters of the Earl of Worcester. He was appointed Sheriff of Cork by the Queen, and returned to Ireland in 1597. The next year came the terrible Tyrone rebellion, during which Kilcolman Castle was seized and burnt to the ground. Spenser's youngest child perished in the flames, and he and his wife escaped with difficulty. Crushed by this misfortune, Spenser died the next year in England, and was buried in Westminster Abbey by Chaucer's side.

The "Faerie Queene" was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, with the bold wish that it "might live with the eternity of her fame." The wish has been realized. Spenser produced in it our first great ideal poem, which has made, and will ever make, new poets as long as the English tongue is known. In it we see reflected all the elements of this great literary period at their best: the strong vigour of imagination and love of beauty, which made Lamb call him "the poet's poet"; the sweetness and delicacy of expression which has earned for him the name of the "painter's poet," the real depth of religious feeling, for which Milton praises him as "our sweet and serious poet."

The keynote of Spenser's poetry is love of beauty, external beauty being taken by him as the outward expression of inner spiritual beauty. In the "Hymn to Heavenly Beauty" he writes:

"For of the soul the body form doth take,
For soul is form and doth the body make.
* * * * *
For all that fair is, is by nature good."

And, again, in one of his sonnets (No. 79):

"The true fair that is the gentle wit
And vertuous mind
That is true beauty, that doth argue you
To be divine and born of heavenly seed."

And throughout the "Faerie Queene" the same idea is brought out in the allegory.

The plan of the "Faerie Queene" was a very complex one. It could not have been gathered from the poem itself, for the poet plunges into the midst of his story and gives us no clue to the plot; but, fortunately, Spenser discovered his mistake, and explained the scheme in a letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, which was added to the poem as a preface. He imagines the "Faerie Queene," Gloriana, to be holding a twelve days' festival at her Court, upon each day of which one of the knights of her Court undertakes some brave enterprise at her appointment and in her honour. Each knight represents a

Plan of
"Faerie
Queene."

virtue, and Prince Arthur, who stands for magnificence or greatness of soul, was to fall in with each knight in turn, and help and save him by his superior power and virtue. On the first day a fair lady, Una, who has been driven from her kingdom, and whose parents are enthralled by a terrible dragon, claims pity and help. A "clownish" young man rises and begs for the adventure, and, though all are amazed at his presumption, when he dons the armour which Una has brought for her champion he seems "the goodliest man in all the company." He is knighted and sets forth on his errand of mercy with Una at his side, and thus we are led up to the opening lines of Canto I.

Spenser seems to have had some sequence in his mind in the choice of the Christian virtues represented in the books. Book I. is Holiness, the fidelity of the soul to God ; Book II., Temperance, the fidelity of the body to God ; Books III. and IV., Chastity and Friendship ; Books V. and VI., Justice and Courtesy, deal with the bonds which unite human beings to one another ; and, lastly, Books III. to VII. Constancy (Book VII., unfinished) represents a virtue without which these various ties would be incomplete.

Spenser completed about half of these twelve books ; he speaks in this letter of another twelve, which were to depict the political virtues, but of these we have no trace.

The allegory is twofold : the knights and their opponents, whilst they represent the contest of certain virtues with opposing vices, and all the difficulties which beset the Christian soldier in his struggle for the right, also represent characters of the day. Prince Arthur is Magnificence, and also Sidney, and sometimes Leicester ; Gloriana, the highest glory of God, and also Elizabeth ; Arthegall, abstract justice, and Lord Grey ; Duessa, Falsehood, and also the Church of Rome, and sometimes Mary, Queen of Scots ; and so on throughout the poem. The

story of Book I. is the most interesting, and should be read by everybody. The allegorical power shown in such pictures as the "seven deadly sins" of Canto IV., the Cave of Despair of Canto IX., and the House of Holiness of Canto X., can hardly be surpassed.

In style and language the "Faerie Queene" is archaic, as Spenser considered appropriate to the bygone ages of chivalry with which he was dealing. His use of alliteration

Style and Metre.

also is overdone, and becomes wearisome, and this use of a language which had passed away, together with the complexity and consequent confusion of the plot, are considered the chief defects of this masterpiece.

The "Faerie Queene" is written in divisions called cantos, and each canto is divided into stanzas. The stanza is a nine-lined verse, a modification by Spenser of the eight-lined verse called "chant royal," very popular in France. Spenser added to the eight pentameter lines a ninth, and made it an Alexandrine, or six-foot line. The rhymes run thus : *a b, a b, b c, b c, c.*

Around Spenser cluster a number of lesser lights, most of which we can only name. Most bear the stamp of Elizabethan versatility : *Daniel*, with his *History of the Civil Wars*, his masques and tragedies and his sonnets ; and *Drayton* with his long patriotic poem *Polyolbion*, in which he celebrates the glories of his native land almost exhaustively, and his really fine sonnets ; and *Sir John Davies*, with his clever philosophical poem, *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), and *Orchestra*, or the art of dancing, the application of a rhythmical standard to all the motions of life.

As head of a literary party, and as himself an author of no mean pretensions, we must next speak of Sidney. *Philip*

Sidney,
1554-1586. *Sidney's* life belongs as much to history as to literature. He was son of Sir Henry Sidney, President of Wales, and was born in 1554.

Educated at Shrewsbury and Christ Church, Oxford, he was sent, on finishing his college career, to Paris in the

train of the Ambassador Walsingham to learn something of diplomacy, and was sheltered in his house on the day of St. Bartholomew. He went on afterwards to Frankfort; but in 1575 we find him again in England, and a few years later he formed his friendship with Spenser and Harvey. The pedantic taste of the latter had a good deal of influence on the young poet. In 1580, during a temporary retirement from Court, he wrote, at his beautiful Kentish home, Penshurst, the "*Arcadia*," a pastoral romance, written carelessly on loose scraps of paper, chiefly for the amusement of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, and never intended for publication.

A series of sonnets, called *Astrophel and Stella*, addressed to Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex, followed the romance, and brought Sidney contemporary fame as a poet. In 1581 appeared his *Defence of Poesie*. In 1583 he married Frances Walsingham, and the following year was made Governor of Flushing. In 1586 he died at the Battle of Zutphen.

The place which Sidney took in the regard of his fellow-countrymen is well known, and in literature it is proved beyond doubt by the frequent allusions to him as the "mirror of knighthood" and "England's noblest son," by the number of books dedicated to him, and the many elegies written on his death.

The *Arcadia* is a pastoral romance with a far-fetched plot, or, rather, a tissue of plots, and may be considered in some

"*Arcadia*," respects the direct ancestor of the modern
1580. novel, for love is its chief subject, and marriage

the denouement. The style is marked by some of the affectations of the time, and there is considerable incongruity in the mingling of the chivalric element with the pastoral background of the Arcadian regions, but the tone is as simple and pure as the man himself.

The "*Defence of Poesie*," or "*Apologie for Poetrie*," was the first piece of literary criticism which appeared in England. It was called forth by an abusive attack made by *Stephen*

Gosson, in his *School of Abuse*, on "pipers, players, jesters, poets, and such-like caterpillars of the Commonwealth."

Sidney maintains the honour and dignity of poetry, shows its antiquity and universality, the noble influence which it has ever exercised over men's minds. He then answers some of the chief objections urged by the Puritan school against poetry, criticises some of the poetry of his time, and ends with words of noble praise. The whole book is characterized by the gentle, temperate tone which we should expect from the courteous Sidney.

It is still an open question whether the sonnets of Sidney were the result of a real passion for Penelope Devereux, or whether he simply, according to the conventional fashion of the time, used her name as an object for admiring praise. In artistic power Sidney's sonnets show a great advance on the earlier ones of Wyatt and Surrey, and may rank beside Spenser's.

**Sonnets
about 1580.**

The name of Sidney naturally suggests that of *John Lyly*, whose great work, "*Euphues*," gave the name to a particular style of writing and speaking, which made itself more or less felt from the latter half of Elizabeth's reign up to the Restoration. Of Lyly's life very little is known. He was an Oxford man, and a prolific writer of dramas, pamphlets and lyrics.

**John Lyly,
1553-1606.**

His prose work appeared in two parts, *Euphues, or the Anatomy of Wit*, in 1579, and *Euphues and his England*, in 1580. The plot is a slender thread on which "*Euphues*," is hung many long discussions and discourses of a moral nature. The hero, *Euphues* (the name is borrowed from Ascham), is a youth of Athens, of "more wit than wealth, and yet of more wealth than wisdom." He is admonished by Eubulus, an old gentleman whom he meets at Naples, and who is struck with his levity. An unhappy love affair, and the consequent breach with his friend Philautus, help to sober *Euphues*, and he in his turn becomes Mentor to his friends, and writes long letters of good counsel. In one of these we have Lyly's opinions on education, which

coincide to a great extent with Ascham's, especially in condemning the practice of sending English youths to Italy for education.

In the second part the two friends, Euphues and Philautus, visit England, and we have a lively picture of the English Court in the days in which conversation was an art, and spirited, witty word-contests were kept up, enlivened by jests, concerts, and illustrations.

The style known as *Euphuism* has been severely criticised as "mere affectation," a "fantastic play on words," "absurd pedantry," and so on; perhaps the severer judgments were formed rather from exaggerated imitations than from the book which gave its name to the style. It is not an affected or unreal work, but it has in its style much of this overstrained method of expression, which had its counterpart in the literature of other countries of Europe of the period, notably in Spain. The style is still better known from the clever parodies of it in Shakespeare's "Love's Labour's Lost" and Scott's "Monastery" than from the "Euphues" or "Arcadia."

Its main characteristics are the abundant use of antithesis, or the even balancing of one part of a sentence against the other, and of alliteration. For example, from the title-page of the book,

"The delights that wit followeth in his youth by the pleasantness of love,"

and

"The happiness that he reapeth in age by the perfectness of wisdom,"
are evenly balanced within the same compound sentence.
Or, again,

"Thou thinkest it honourable to go to the grave with a gray head ;"
but

"I deem it more glorious to be buried with an honest name."

Examples of alliteration also abound : Naples is "a place of more pleasure than profit, and yet of more profit than

piety," and Euphues a man "of more wit than wealth, and yet of more wealth than wisdom."

Besides these two leading characteristics, Euphuism embraces an abundant use of illustrations drawn from all kinds of sources—classical, mythological, and homely—and is rich in proverbial sayings: "Is it not a by-word," Lyly writes, "that like will to like?" And, again, "Fayre words fat few," and "Children and fools speak true."

Charles Kingsley calls "Euphues," "in spite of occasional tediousness and pedantry, as brave, righteous, and pious a book as a man need look into."

Lyly is one of the sweetest of the Elizabethan song-writers. His lyrics (like those of his greater contemporaries, Marlowe and Ben Jonson) appear chiefly in his dramas.

"What bird does sing, yet so does wail?
O, 'tis the ravish'd nightingale.
'Jug, jug, jug, jug tereu!' she cries,
And still her woes at midnight rise.
Brave prick-song! 'Who is't now we hear?'
None but the lark so shrill and clear;
How at Heaven's gate she claps her wings,
The morn not waking till she sings!
Hark! hark! with what a pretty throat
Poor Robin Redbreast tunes his note!
Hark! how the jolly cuckoos sing!
Cuckoo! to welcome in the spring!
Cuckoo! to welcome in the spring!"

The songs of the Elizabethan period well repay study. Take, as a few examples only, Lyly's *Cupid and Campaspe*, and *Nightingale Song* (quoted above), Dyer's *My Elizabethan Lyrics* *mind to me a kingdom is*, Marlowe's *Come, live with me and be my love*, and, as a greater gem still, its companion song, *The Nymph's Reply*, by Sir Walter Raleigh:

"If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy love."

In 1589 the "Martin Marprelate" controversy was raging in England (see Chapter III., p. 50). Whitgift, appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1583, was determined to stamp out Puritanism, and his measures roused great opposition. A determined but moderate and wise champion for the English Church arose in Richard Hooker, and in his great work, "The Ecclesiastical Polity," the wisest arguments in favour of the English Church system are to be found.

Religious
Contro-
versy.

Richard Hooker, born in 1553, was educated at Oxford, and took Holy Orders. He married, and was given a small country living, where former pupils from the University found him reading Horace between the distractions of minding the sheep abroad and rocking the cradle at home. Partly through the exertions of these friends Hooker was appointed Preacher to the Temple Church. He shared this office with Travers, a strict Puritan, and Fuller tells us that the pulpit spoke "pure Canterbury in the morning and pure Geneva in the afternoon."

Hooker,
1553-1600.

Partly in answer to the many attacks upon his opinions made by Travers and his party, Hooker planned, and afterwards wrote, his great work. At length the controversy became so objectionable to one of Hooker's gentle, peace-loving disposition that he asked for other preferment, and was moved to Boscombe, Wilts, and finally to Bishopsbourne, near Canterbury. Here he was able to give his time to thought and study for the production of his great literary work.

Travers had in his sermons and pamphlets spoken of illegality in connection with the position of the English Church. Hooker tries to refute this charge by making an elaborate examination of law itself. He cannot speak too highly of law; God Himself is its originator, and works in accordance with it; and he goes on to show that the obedience of the creature to law is the stay of the whole world.

"The Eccle-
siastical
Polity,' 1594:
Its Plan.

The work is divided into eight books. In the fourth Hooker specially attacks the Puritan position. He considers their chief error to consist in resting too exclusively on the *letter* of Scripture as the sole guide of conduct. He shows that law may be divided into natural and positive, the first being the law shown to us by reason and revelation, and the last, law which varies according to circumstance, which must depend on the judgment of men. Such law cannot be deduced *directly* from the Scriptures; the laws relating to the ecclesiastical system would fall under this category. No one had yet produced so philosophical a work on theology, or one that had so great a plan. The sense of law and just balancing of the rights of man, which is very noticeable in Hooker, probably gained for him the title of the "judicious Hooker." It was first applied to him by Locke (chap. vii.), and has always been commended as specially appropriate.

The literary interest of the book is great; the language throughout is very fine—a worthy example of pure and lofty English prose, rising in parts, as in his eulogy of law, his passages on the ministry of angels and on the value of prayer, into noble poetry both in feeling and rhythm.

Book I. ends thus:

"Of Law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God; her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both angels and men and creatures, of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

Later Elizabethan prose finds its chief glory in the works of *Francis Bacon*. He was born in 1560, son of Sir Nicholas

Bacon, Lord Keeper to Queen Elizabeth. His mother was an intellectual woman, and herself trained and taught the boy, who was too delicate for school in childhood. When about fourteen years of age he was placed at Trinity College, Cambridge. University

education of his time had no attraction for Bacon, and he conceived a great dislike for the philosophy of Aristotle as "unfruitful" for the service of man, and productive of "disputations and contentions." The Lord Keeper, destining his son for diplomatic life, sent him, when he left Cambridge, to Paris in the suite of Sir Amias Paulet, the English Ambassador. His father's sudden death in 1579 cut short his career, as he found himself almost unprovided for. He began his study for the Bar in 1582, and two years later entered Parliament. During Elizabeth's reign he never rose to high position; he had powerful enemies as well as distinguished friends at Court.

Burleigh, his uncle by marriage, seems to have distrusted him as a man of theories. His best friend at Court was the brilliant but unstable Earl of Essex, who repeatedly tried, unsuccessfully, to obtain high office for him. On Essex's fall and impeachment, Bacon was appointed one of the counsel against him, and has always been blamed for the part which he took in the condemnation of his former patron. Essex was undoubtedly guilty, but whether it was a duty incumbent on Bacon to prove his guilt has always been a matter of controversy. Unfortunately, Bacon's public career is not altogether free from the charge of self-interest, and there is no doubt that his position as an advocate of Essex's cause would have been a most dangerous one at this crisis, considering the well-known intimacy that had existed between them.

On the accession of James I. Bacon's fortunes improved. In 1607 he became Solicitor-General, in 1613 Attorney-General, and finally, in 1618, Lord-Chancellor, with the title of Baron Verulam, and in 1620 of Viscount St. Albans. This last honour was followed speedily by his fall. He was charged with taking bribes and allowing corruption, and in 1621 brought to trial and condemned, on his own confession of guilt, to fine, imprisonment during the King's pleasure, and degradation from office. There is no evidence that Bacon was a corrupt judge, but that he had been lax in allowing corruption there seems little doubt. He himself said after-

wards, and probably with truth: "I was the justest judge that was in England these fifty years; but it was the justest censure in Parliament that was these two hundred years." The whole affair was probably contrived to divert the attention of Parliament from a far worse offender, Buckingham. The sentence was not carried out rigorously, and Bacon was allowed to retire to his estates at Gorhambury, where he gave himself up to the pursuit of science, which he loved so genuinely. He died, in 1626, from a chill taken when carrying out a scientific investigation.

Pope has called Bacon, in a famous epigrammatic line, "The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind"; but this last epithet is certainly not deserved. He had a noble conception of the use of life, and an earnest desire to benefit mankind by enriching the sum of human knowledge. The one end of learning he declares to be "the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate." In spite of the low aims of those around him, of the discouragement he received from those in authority, and the ignorance and want of sympathy he met with even from friends, he patiently and firmly held to his great aim, and worked out a system of philosophical reasoning by which he hoped to make knowledge "sure and fruitful" for all generations. His works will divide into the philosophical, scientific, moral, and historical.

Bacon has given his name to a system of philosophy. Not that it is in any sense original to him. He perfected and developed the system, and by expressing thoughts, dim and confused before, in his splendid language gave them life and force.

Philosophical System.

This system was opposed to that of Aristotle and the schoolmen of the Middle Ages, who had often misinterpreted the great Greek philosopher's teaching. His great aim was to make all reasoning *inductive*, and not, as before, *deductive*. In deduction the law is laid down as probable, and then tested by experiment; in induction as many instances as possible are collected, and from the observation of them the law is derived.

The inductive method may often fail in practice, but it serves to teach the great lesson that Bacon wanted to impress on men—that Nature must be questioned and made to answer for herself; and truth must never be taken for granted, but pursued by man with earnest and patient investigation.

Bacon planned a great philosophical work in six books, the *Instauratio Magna*, or the great reconstruction of learning. This was never completed, but some of its sections have come down to us as separate works.

Plan of the Great Philosophical Work. I. *The Advancement of Learning* was written in two books in 1605; shortly before his death it was published in a Latin form and expanded to nine books. Bacon points out the discredits which have come to learning from human defects, condemns the emptiness of the studies chosen, shows what is the true aim of learning. In Book II. he makes an exhaustive analysis of all subjects of intellectual study.

II. *The Novum Organon* explains his new theory of reasoning, and shows that the inquirer must put on a childlike spirit. He deals with the false notions (idols, as he calls them) which occupy the mind and keep out true knowledge.

III. *A Natural History* was never completed, but it is an accumulation of facts, opinions, sayings, and conjectures, about all branches of Nature study.

Bacon elected to write his chief works in Latin; even the "Advancement of Learning," written first in English, was carefully translated by him into Latin; it is, however, his few English works that have best held their own, and by his *Essays* he is best known to the general reader. In these *Essays* we have Bacon as a moralist. The word

Moral Works : The Essays. "essay" was used by him in its most exact sense as a first trial, or weighing of a subject, such as is suggested by our other form of the same word—an "assay" of something. The essay of modern times suggests a finished treatise on a subject.

The Essays appeared in three editions in the years 1597, 1612, and 1625. The first edition, consisting of ten essays only, was dedicated to his brother. In these the student is predominant, and the "Essay of Studies" leads the way. The judgment is remarkably developed for such a young writer, and the reasoning is clear and sound. The second edition, of 1612, dedicated to Prince Henry, begins with the "Essay of Religion." Religion is treated chiefly from a political point of view, and the statesman is prominent throughout the series of forty essays. In the third edition, 1625, dedicated to the Duke of Buckingham, the first place is given to truth — the philosophical search for truth which may be said to have been the passion of Bacon's life.

In style the Essays are concise and polished. The deep learning of the writer is apparent, but never forced upon us; and the shrewd comments and pithy observations show that we have the work of a man of the world, a keen critic of men and their manners, as well as the learned student and profound thinker.

For conciseness, for power of packing much thought into small space, the Essays of "Studies," "Travels," "Gardens," should be studied; for more diffuseness of style and richer fancy, such essays as "Friendship," "Truth," "Cunning," may be taken as illustrations.

An interesting English work, though incomplete, was *The New Atlantis*, a philosophical romance, written in 1624. It is a description of an ideal state, such as Plato pictured in his "Republic" and Sir Thomas More in his "Utopia." The story is of some mariners taking refuge on an unknown island in the Southern Seas (the name Atlantis being borrowed from Plato), and finding there a perfect State. Characteristically, Bacon dwells chiefly on the scientific plans and improvements which he had in his own mind, and many of which have only been perfected in our own times.

The *Wisdom of the Ancients* has for its object, as Bacon

explains in the preface, to show the real truths which underlie the fables and allegories of the ancients.

The *History of Henry VII.* is the only complete historical work written by Bacon. It was probably meant as part of

Historic Work.

a greater project—a history beginning with the accession of the Tudors, and to be brought down to his own time. His history is not always accurate, but he shows considerable discernment of character and power of depicting it. It has often been called the beginning of modern historical writing, and nothing so finished in style or so good in form belongs to the same period, with the exception of Raleigh's "History of the World." Some good work had been done in Elizabeth's reign by the history chronicler and the translator.

In 1565 *Stow*, a citizen of London, produced a *Summary of English Chronicles*, and in 1598 a *Survey of London*, which is still of great interest and value to the anti-

Historians.

quary in his research. *Raphael Holinshed's Chronicle* (1578), which took the form of a general history of England, furnished material for many of Shakespeare's plays; and it is remarkable, in comparing any given play with the *Chronicle*, to find how very closely the great dramatist has kept to his authority, whilst transforming with his genius everything that he has borrowed. Other names of historians are those of Grafton and Speed, but their work, though showing careful research and thought, is singularly deficient in interest.

The later Elizabethan age abounded in translators. In 1579 appeared a fine *translation of Plutarch* by Sir Thomas

Translators.

North, which was taken by Shakespeare as the groundwork of his Roman history plays. *John Florio*, a Euphuistic writer, produced an excellent *translation of Montaigne's Essays* in 1603. But quite the most valuable translation is that of Homer by *George Chapman*. His complete version of the "Iliad" was published in 1611, and the "Odyssey" in 1615.

Chapman was a dramatist of some merit, but his genius,

though brilliant, was irregular. His Homer translation is a remarkable work, full of vigour and life.

Chapman's Homer, 1611. He has caught the spirit of the old Greek poet, but the book commends itself to its readers rather as an original poem inspired by the same

theme than as an accurate translation.

To the same year (1611) belongs the translation of the Bible known ever since as the "Authorised Version." It was the completion of the work begun by Tyndale, various reproductions or revisions of which had appeared from time to time. The King's Bible (as the version of, 1611 was called) was the work of companies of picked scholars and divines, who carried on their work at three centres—Westminster, Oxford, and Cambridge. It is a noble monument of the prose of the seventeenth century.

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618), whose life belongs to history, was a patron of literature and a writer of some brilliancy.

After enjoying great favour under Elizabeth, Raleigh's "History," he was accused, on the accession of James I., of complicity in a plot to place the unfortunate Arabella Stuart on the throne, and, being condemned to death, was kept a prisoner in the Tower for over twelve years. During this time he planned and partly executed his great work, *A History of the World* (1614). The part completed took in the history of mankind from the Creation up to the second Macedonian War. It is a remarkable work, marking an epoch in history-writing—a new departure from the bare chronicling of facts, and one of the first serious attempts to treat the subject philosophically.

In 1616 Raleigh was released to lead a new expedition to South America. This proved unsuccessful, and James I., to propitiate the Spaniards, whom Raleigh had deeply incensed, threw him into prison again, and allowed him to be executed on his old sentence.

Raleigh had some poetic power also. "The Lie," a vigorous poem with much satirical force, has been attributed to him; and he produced some charming lyrics (p. 62).

PERIOD IV (*continued*)

ELIZABETHAN : THE DRAMA

Early plays : The miracle, mystery, mortality, pageant, interlude—First stage of real drama—Second stage : Peel, Greene, Marlowe, Shakespeare — Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors — Decline of Elizabethan drama.

THE drama has everywhere begun in the religious life of the people. The noble Greek tragedies, which have been the

Drama begins in Religion.

model for writers of all ages and all countries, were written for great religious festivals, were performed as part of a religious ceremonial, and began with solemn offering of sacrifice and pouring out of libations to the gods. In England, also, the earliest plays were simple representations of Bible stories or the legends of the saints ; and at a stage when the people were quite uneducated, and also childlike in their capability for being impressed, no effective or more popular manner could have been found for educating them in Bible truths and Bible history.

These plays first appear in a written form in our literature about the twelfth century, but probably long before this there

Miracle Plays.

were representations of the Nativity and Resurrection at Christmas and at Easter which never passed into written form. The earliest play that we know of was composed in 1110, to be performed by the boys of the Abbey School of St. Albans, and was called *The Deeds of St. Catharine*. The custom soon became

popular for schoolboys to act these religious plays, and we have a survival of the custom in the annual play which is required from the Westminster boys.

The plays were at first kept in the hands of the Church authorities, the first actors being the clergy, choristers, or the monks and their scholars. They were acted during Divine service, and in the Church. For instance, in the *Shepherd Plays*, of which we have a whole series extant, the first scene would be of the shepherds watching their flocks, in the grassy churchyard, whilst such of the audience as could not secure a place in the church itself would sit and stand round about the sacred enclosure. From the belfry tower, where some of the choir would be concealed, would sound forth the angels' message, "Glory to God in the highest." Then the shepherds, after some debate, in which one was always represented as unbelieving and refractory, determine to go "even unto Bethlehem." They then enter the church and proceed to the chancel, where a representation of the Manger and the Holy Family has been placed. The scene would end with the adoration of the shepherds and the singing of appropriate carols.

These religious plays are known as "miracle" and "mystery" plays, and though there is no very rigid distinction between a "miracle" and a "mystery" in England, there are certain differences. A *miracle* may have for its subject any story based on the Bible or the legends of the saints, and very soon admitted a more secular element. The *mystery* was always connected with the service of the Church, and its subject was drawn from the New Testament, and generally dealt with some great mystery of our religion, as the

Incarnation or the Atonement. In the thirteenth century the acting of these plays passed from the exclusive possession of the clergy. As the more secular element increased, and the comic character became irrepressible, it was found unsuitable to connect them especially with religious ceremonial. We then have the rise of dramatic

**Dramatic
Guilds,
Thirteenth
Century.**

guilds. Complete series of plays setting forth all the essential parts of Scripture, from the Creation to the Last Judgment, were taken up and produced by the various guilds of a large town, each guild being responsible for one series at least.

There are three sets of these miracle plays which are extant, those of *Chester*, *Wakefield*, and *Coventry*. The Chester and Wakefield were performed on fixed stages put up in public places in the town, or later in open spaces outside the town walls. The stages were arranged in three divisions, representing heaven, earth, and hell. The Coventry plays were acted on movable stages, drawn one after the other through the streets, while the spectators would look on from platforms erected in the streets, windows, or house-tops. The last of the Coventry plays dates 1580, but we have a distinct survival of the miracle play in the "puppet-shows" or "motions," which we hear of as late as the beginning of the eighteenth century, and a relic in the "Punch" of our own day. The effect of the religious play at its best can be best understood by comparing it with the influence still exercised by like representation on a devout and simple people in the "Passion Play" of Ober-Ammergau.

Side by side with the miracle play arose the *moral play* or *morality*, which to a great extent superseded it. It arose

partly as a reaction against the lighter and more irreverent element which had crept into the "miracle." The characters in the morality are chiefly personified vices and virtues, or qualities and conditions of life. For example, in the "Castle of Perseverance," one of the earliest extant, Humankind is besieged by Mundus, Caro, and Belial, whilst the cardinal virtues fight for his deliverance.

In Skelton's *Magnificence*, a later morality, the vices under feigned names insinuate themselves into favour with Magnificence, and make him dismiss his servants, the virtues. They then deliver him to Adversity, Mischief, and finally to Despair, who hands him a dagger to stab himself with, when Good

Hope returns, stays his hand, and gradually restores him to his former well-being and happiness.

The *pageant*, a short play distinguished by gorgeousness of dress and arrangement, became very popular in the fifteenth century. It combined something of the character of miracle and morality, having personified virtues and vices, and also some Scriptural characters, but there is very little plot in the pageant. The morality failed to permanently interest men who wanted to see character and life represented to them, and we find it giving way in its turn to the "interlude," the last stage before the real drama is reached. Human characters reappear in the *interlude*, though the personifications are still retained. In Henry VII.'s reign arose the custom of forming bodies of actors under the King's patronage—the King's servants.

One of these Court poets, *John Heywood* (1497-1580), was a most industrious writer of interludes, and his *Four P's*, which belongs to the end of Henry VIII.'s reign, is a good type of the play. It is an amusing little piece, turning on the competition in lying between a Palmer, a Pedlar, a Potycary, and a Pardoner. After outvying each other in stories of the impossible witnessed on their various travels, the Palmer gains the prize by asserting that, of the 500,000 women he has met on his pilgrimages, he has never seen one who was not patient and gentle! All agree that such an assertion cannot be surpassed, and the Palmer goes off the triumphant victor.

Such a play is full of humour and satire and sly hits at the follies of the day, but it is still only a dialogue; there is no *action* and no *plot*.

When we get these missing elements added, we have reached at length the first stage of the regular drama.

Latin plays had long been popular at the University and at some of the public schools. Occasionally these were plays arranged by some member of the University, and modelled on the plays of Seneca or Terence. This custom had much increased under the influence of the Renaissance. At last it

occurred to a Headmaster of Eton, *Nicholas Udall*, to write an English play for his boys to act, and in this play we have our first English comedy, *Ralph Roister-Doister*, probably written about 1563. The comic element always existing in the miracle plays, moralities, and interludes, is closely connected with our earliest comedies.

The simple credulous character who afforded so much amusement by his stupidity, whether as the refractory shepherd of the miracle play or the too frail "quality" of the morality, reappears as the hero of the first comedy, *Ralph Roister-Doister*, while in the mischievous guile of the villain of the piece, *Matthew Merygreke*, we are much reminded of the exploits of the *Judas* or "the Vice" of the earlier representations.

Ralph Roister-Doister woos a rich widow, *Dame Custance*, with ill success. He employs a scrivener to write a love epistle, which is to touch the widow's heart, but, unfortunately, commissions *Merygreke* to read it aloud. By misplacing the stops, *Merygreke* contrives that all the compliments shall read as insults, and the fair promises as threats.

"But when ye are merry I will be all sad,
When ye are sorry I will be very glad,
When ye seek your heart's ease I will be unkind:
At no time in me shall ye much gentleness find."

This is an amusing lesson in punctuation worthy of a schoolmaster, and sure to be much appreciated by his pupils. A fierce struggle follows, and a mimic battle between *Roister-Doister* and his friends and the *Dame* and her maids armed with broom-sticks. *Merygreke*, pretending to help *Roister-Doister*, really helps the enemy. At a critical moment *Good-luck*, a merchant and a former lover of *Custance*, returns from his voyage, claims her as his wife, and the hero has to accept a place at the wedding-feast with more or less good grace.

Another comedy often attributed to *Bishop Still* is *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, where the whole action turns on the loss of a needle, with which the good dame has been mending a garment

of her husband's. It is a very inferior production to "Ralph Roister-Doister," and the humour is decidedly coarse.

A little later, perhaps, we have the rise of English tragedy. The difference between a tragedy and a comedy has often been

defined as a difference in termination: the tragedy ends sadly for the chief characters concerned, while the comedy ends happily.

But there is more than this to distinguish the two. The subject of the tragedy must have in it something great and important, it must stir up emotion and must be expressed in dignified language. Comedy, on the other hand, may take an action of slight importance, some trivial incident of everyday life, for its subject; it is intended, not to excite deep emotion, but to amuse, and sometimes to correct folly or vice by means of ridicule. The language must suit the subject, and not be too high-flown.

Tragedy in England springs from the classical revival, and in many respects takes the Greek play as its model.

Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex, was composed by *Sackville*, and was performed for the first time before Queen Elizabeth.

The story resembles that of *King Lear*. *Gorboduc*, a King of ancient Britain, divides his realm before his death between his two sons.

The younger one is discontented with his share, and rises against his brother. The Queen takes the side of the elder, *Ferrex*, and kills *Porrex*. The people then rise in rebellion, and mother and son are slain. This gloomy work was not *Sackville's* best from a poetical point of view, but it bears evidence to the mechanical progress of the drama. Blank verse is used for the first time on the stage, and each act is preceded by a "dumb-show," which foreshadows the action which is to follow. Thus, the old fable of the bundle of sticks which could not be broken is acted in "dumb-show" before Act I. to show that the moral of the coming tragedy is, that a disunited State can never be happy or prosperous. As in the Greek drama, the murders do not take place on the stage, but are announced by messengers, and each act closes

with a "chorus," unlike the Greek chorus, which consisted of several characters, who remained on the stage throughout the play. The English chorus is spoken by one person, who moralizes on the events of the act just ended, or prepares the way for that which is to come, and then leaves the stage. Shakespeare uses such a chorus to introduce the subject of each act of "Henry V."

"Gorboduc" was a successful play, and a great number followed in its wake, and many fresh companies were formed for the production of plays. It had become

Acting Companies. the custom for many of the great nobles to keep companies of actors in their retinue, who produced for their amusement masques, pageants, and interludes. The companies often travelled about the country under the patronage of the nobles to whose households they belonged, styling themselves "my Lord of Leicester's servants," "the Lord Chamberlain's servants," and so on. They acted in the streets on roughly-erected stages, until the town authorities interfered and drove them out of the narrow streets to some open space outside the town, known as the "round," where in a rough sort of amphitheatre a large audience could be accommodated. The courtyards of inns were also often chosen as an informal theatre; the balconies were crowded with the privileged classes, and the ground-floor filled up at the last moment by an eager crowd from the streets outside, Shakespeare's "groundlings," as he terms them. Of scenery there was very little pretence; placards with "This is a ship," "This is a battlefield," were enough to call up the surroundings to the mind. The dress was handsome and elaborate, but always of the fashion and cut of the period of the day.

It was not until 1576 that the first theatre was built at Blackfriars. This was followed by "The Theatre" and "The Curtain," near Shoreditch, and in 1599 the

Early Theatres. "Globe Theatre," near London Bridge. It was built as a summer theatre, open to the sky, the stage only being roofed in, and circular in shape, recalling the primitive stage on the old English "round."

The second stage in the history of the real drama is marked specially by the productions of three writers: Peel, Greene, Period II.: and Marlowe. All three were University men,

Peel, belonged to the class of actor-dramatists, led Greene, wild and reckless lives. Greene died in abject Marlowe. poverty, brought on by his dissipated career; Peel and Marlowe perished in drunken brawls. They were all three strongly influenced by the Renaissance, and the virtues and defects of Italian literature appear in their works. Keen appreciation of beauty, some sublimity of expression, appear side by side with great license of speech and coarseness. In their work, too, we see the Italian desire to reproduce violent crimes and depict unbridled passions, a desire which, later, partly inspired "Othello," and which has given the name of the "tragedy of blood" to the plays of this period.

Robert Greene has left us six plays and a collection of stories, known as *Pandosto*, from which Shakespeare took the plot of the "Winter's Tale." *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *George-a-Greene*, *Orlando Furioso*, are some of the best of his plays. His work shows an advance on that of Sackville in the matter of characterization, though this is still crude, and his language has been described as "clear and graceful." Greene was a writer of songs, sonnets, as well as a pamphleteer.

George Peel has given us the first serious attempt at an historical play in his *Famous Chronicle of Edward I.*, which, with all its defects, may be looked on as the forerunner of Shakespeare's "English Histories."

David and Bathsheba, in spite of its tediousness, is the finest of Peel's plays, and shows distinct advance in the delineation of passion; but there is still very little action, and character is rather indicated than fully worked out.

The *Old Wives' Tale* is chiefly interesting as having probably suggested to Milton the story of his "Comus."

Christopher Marlowe was son of a shoemaker at Canterbury, was educated at the King's School, Canterbury, and then at

Cambridge. He was a creative genius, and his works formed a model even for Shakespeare. Marlowe has great power in depicting extreme passions and their development ; but he fails in working out the ordinary complexities of the human character. This is not surprising, when we remember that he died before he was thirty years of age ; and it has always been a matter of great speculation what would have been the future of this strange, irregular genius, which developed and bore fruit so early.

Tamburlaine, his first great work, is in some respects an exaggerated burlesque, depicting the triumphs and atrocities of the Asiatic conqueror of the fourteenth century, but it has undoubted power ; both in dramatic action and character-drawing it has advanced beyond the work of Peel or Greene. In language and metre we see the master-hand. Blank verse, in "Marlowe's mighty line," becomes from henceforth the recognised language of the drama.

The *Jew of Malta* reminds us of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice," but the likeness is but superficial. There is no touch of humanity in Marlowe's Jew.

The *Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* is quite the most interesting of Marlowe's plays. Taking the old well-known story of the learned Faustus, who tampered with the powers of evil until he had bargained away his soul in return for present gain, he gives us a powerful tragedy of the human soul. Unlike the idea in the traditional story, of the absolute sway exercised through magic arts of those who had once yielded to the temptations of evil, Marlowe asserts plainly the freedom of the human will. Faustus, though his will is weakened through sin, has not lost the power of recovery even to the bitter end, and the lament of the chorus with which the play ends is indescribably pathetic :

"Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burnèd is Apollo's laurel-bough,
That sometime grew within this learned man."

"Doctor Faustus" is linked with the dramatic representations of the past in many ways. The subject-matter reminds

us of the miracles and mysteries; glimpses are given of heaven and hell, of good and evil spirits. The repeated introduction of the good and evil angel struggling for the mastery with Faustus is suggestive of the Morality, as is also a powerful allegorical picture of the seven deadly sins. The pageant reappears in the gorgeous dumb-shows and visions invoked by magic power, whilst the ancient Greek drama is followed in the revival of the chorus.

Marlowe's *Edward II.* comes next in merit, and is in some sense an anticipation of Shakespeare's "Richard II." Marlowe's fame does not rest solely on his plays; he has left us some songs and sonnets, distinguished by their sweetness and imaginative power. One of the best known is, "Come, live with me and be my love."

A large group of dramatists belong to the Marlowe school, amongst which Nash, Lodge, Kyd, are some of the most prominent:

The third stage in the growth of the English drama includes our great dramatist Shakespeare and his contemporaries. As

Shake-
speare
and his Pre-
decessors. regards the technical part of his art, Shakespeare owed much to his predecessors; he used the versification introduced by Sackville and perfected by Marlowe; he consulted the same authorities, chose much the same subjects,

but as regards *treatment of subject and characterization*, Shakespeare is quite unique. Such passions as jealousy, ambition, vengeance, are favourite themes in the former tragedies, but if we compare the treatment of them in "Tamburlaine," "Faustus," or the "Jew of Malta," with the way in which they are handled by Shakespeare in "Othello," "Macbeth," or "Hamlet," we shall see what a wonderful advance has been made, not only in the true understanding of human nature and the development of character, but in the fuller appreciation of cause and effect, and the calmer, wiser judgment with which the story of human passion is treated, and disaster and misfortune shown to be the necessary result of

sin. In comedy, also, there is a great gulf between the coarse works of Shakespeare's immediate predecessors and contemporaries and his own treatment of the comic element. Such coarseness as we find in Shakespeare is never in the *essence* of the piece ; the coarse phrase or incident can be omitted, and does not in the least damage the whole. With his predecessors the coarseness is so interwoven into the plot that few of them can be prepared for modern readers.

The great German commentator on Shakespeare, Gervinus, tells us that the "cleft which separates Shakespeare from his predecessors in history is not so great as that which divides him from them in tragedy and comedy." He suggests certain reasons for this distinction. The same rich sources were open to both in the chronicles, and this material, borrowed from history, was held in "patriotic reverence" by dramatists, and was, therefore, not treated with the wild extravagance in which they felt themselves free to indulge as regards subjects drawn from less authentic sources.

Very little is known of Shakespeare's life. He was the son of John Shakespeare, glover and wool-stapler, of Stratford-on-Avon, and was born April 23, 1564. His

Period III.: mother was Mary Arden, of Wilmcote, near
Shake-
speare
(1564-1616) Stratford. John Shakespeare was a man of
and some position in his own town. He was in
Contem- succession Alderman, High Bailiff, and Chief
poraries. Alderman ; but about the year 1578 prosperity
seems to have forsaken him. He fell into debt,

had to mortgage his wife's farm, and was deprived of his office as Alderman. There is a record extant of his being fined twice for non-attendance at church, and the reason reported is his fear of being arrested for debt. In later years he seems to have recovered some of his property, probably through the help of his famous son, and he died in 1601.

William Shakespeare was educated at the Free Grammar School of Stratford, probably up to the age of twelve. The next record of his boyhood is his marriage in 1582, at the early age of nineteen, to Anne Hathaway, a farmer's daughter

at Shuttery, and eight years his senior. Three children were born to them—Susannah, Hammet, and Judith. In 1586 Shakespeare went to London—it is said in consequence of a youthful escapade. The story runs that he was fined by Sir Thomas Lucy for joining in a deer-stalking expedition to Charlecote Park, and that in retaliation the young poet fastened some satirical and highly disrespectful verses to the park gates. To escape the further vengeance of the worthy magistrate he fled to London. The story may be true, but is hardly necessary to account for his leaving Stratford. Two years previously a travelling company of actors had visited the little town, and Shakespeare, with no regular profession to follow, with a young family, and no prospect of help from his father, may well have been encouraged by their example to try his fortune by joining a London acting company. He must also, with his consciousness of great powers, have longed for a wider field than the small provincial town in which his lot had been cast. He was admitted to the Blackfriars' Acting Company, called the "Lord Chamberlain's Servants," under James Burbage, at "The Theatre." As was commonly the custom, Shakespeare combined the offices of actor and dramatist. In the former rôle he never rose to great distinction; in the latter he confined his attention at first to adapting plays, or writing them in connection with other dramatists. Burbage and Alleyne (the founder of Dulwich College) were the great actors of the day.

Shakespeare's literary life seems to have begun from about 1593. He became known to the Earl of Southampton, was introduced into the Court and to the notice of

Literary Life begins, the Queen. When the Blackfriars' company built a summer theatre, "The Globe," on Bank-side, Shakespeare took shares in the new enter-
1593.

prise. In 1596, in the midst of these prosperous times, Shakespeare lost his only son. During his years as actor-dramatist he seems to have paid a yearly visit to Stratford, and to have taken a warm interest in the affairs of his fellow-citizens. In 1597 he bought New Place, and paid more

frequent and longer visits, and it is probable that his two last plays, "The Winter's Tale" and "The Tempest," were written after his final retirement there in 1611. His daughter Susannah married Dr. Hall, of Stratford, in 1607; and they, with their little daughter (Shakespeare's sole direct descendant), shared the home at New Place. Judith, the younger daughter, married Thomas Quiney, vintner of Stratford, in 1616, and her three sons died in infancy. The same year, on April 23, his reputed birthday, Shakespeare died, aged fifty-two. His wife survived him until 1623, the same year in which the first collected folio edition of Shakespeare's works appeared.

Volumes have been written on the character and opinions of Shakespeare as shown in his works, and every student of English literature should consult such authorities carefully, but always in conjunction with a thoughtful study of the plays themselves (see Bibliography).

We can but notice here a few of the most striking characteristics of our greatest poet. Perhaps the highest tribute to his fame comes from Ben Jonson in the following lines from his famous ode to Shakespeare:

"He was not of an age, but for all time.

* * * * *

Nature herself was proud of his designs,

And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines."

They point to the many-sidedness of the man, and his freedom from narrowness. None of his plays dwell exclusively on some prevailing custom or passing fashion of the time, and he never condescends to take up a party cry of his age. He deals with men as men, his knowledge of human nature is profound, and his plays are founded on those eternal truths which have been revealed by God to man throughout all ages.

A few Leading Character- istics.

In his warm patriotism, perhaps, he was more truly one "of his age" than in any other respect, and more inclined to be narrow in his judgment; but even here the narrower

outlook is chiefly confined to his historical plays, and the heroes and heroines of his romantic works are drawn from many different nationalities.

If, according to Ben Jonson, Shakespeare knew "small Latin, and less Greek," he was well versed, as has been said, in the "book of nature and the book of man." He was not a critical classic scholar; his knowledge of classical and of Italian and French literature was chiefly through translations, but it was an appreciative and intelligent knowledge. With the old chronicles, ballads, romances, and legends of his own country he was most familiar, and he shows intimate knowledge of the language and subject-matter of the Old and New Testaments. He was a keen observer, not only of the ways of men, but of Nature; and very seldom, if ever, is Shakespeare wrong about the growth of a flower, the uses of a herb, or the habits of an animal.

Among his personal tastes we should certainly place love of music. In many passages ("Julius Cæsar," Act I., scene 2; "Merchant of Venice," Act V.; Sonnet viii.) he speaks of the prevailing power of the "true concord of well-tuned sounds." Love of country-life, the songs of birds, the fragrance of sweet flowers, the sheep-shearers' feast, the country song and dance, is continually brought out also, as in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Act II., scene 2; "Hamlet," Act IV., scene 5; "The Winter's Tale," Act IV., scene 3; "Love's Labour's Lost," Act V., scene 2, and many other passages.

Shakespeare's works may be classified in various ways. The chronological method is full of difficulties, as it was the custom

for plays to be handed about in MS., acted and copied long before they were printed, so that records of their publication or representation

at certain dates are often misleading. In trying to determine the date of a play, *evidence external* (such as the entry of the play by the Stationers' Company, and allusions to the work, or quotations from it, in some work the date of which is certainly known), and also *evidence internal* (which includes such variations of style, versification, diction,

Methods of
Classifica-
tion.

growth in judgment and power of characterization, which would distinguish early from late work), must be taken into account. Such points of evidence are discussed fully in Dowden's "Primer of Shakespeare," and can only be alluded to here. The result of much investigation has been to divide Shakespeare's works into four periods. The *earliest* (1590-1596) includes some adaptations of plays in which he worked with fellow-dramatists, a group of early comedies, early histories, and one great tragedy, "Romeo and Juliet."

To the *second period* (1596-1601) belong a group of brilliant comedies, and the two later histories, "Henry IV." and "Henry V."

The *third period* (1601-1608) seems to have been a time of adversity and depression in Shakespeare's life, which was marked in his work by the production of the great tragedies in which he dwelt on the saddest side of human life and touched its most tragic depths. The comedies of this period have been described as "serious and ironical" in character. And then there is the group of seven splendid tragedies, a group which includes the three founded on Roman history.

In the *fourth period* (1608-1611) the cloud, whatever it may have been, had passed away. In the maturer judgment of early middle age Shakespeare looks back upon the "storm and stress" of life with calmer eyes, and gives us a few charming pictures of life, of sad stories which yet *end* well, of reconciliation and forgiveness, in such plays as "The Tempest" and "The Winter's Tale." This last group of plays, drawn from romantic sources—too serious to be pure comedies, too calmly mirthful and happy in their ending to be classed as tragedies—are often called "romances." To this group we must add one historical play, "Henry VIII.," a great part of which is undoubtedly Shakespeare's, though the play was added to and completed by Fletcher.

The method of classification by *subject* is a comparatively simple one. The plays will divide into *tragedies*, *comedies*, *histories*, and *romances*. A simple arrangement of the chief

plays, taking into account their chronology and subject, will be found at the end of this book.

In the plots of his plays Shakespeare was not original. There are hardly any of his stories or his characters which

Source of his Plays.

have not had a pre-existence in some form or other. In treatment of subject and character he is, as we have seen, most original. He found mere skeletons, but he gives us beings clothed with living flesh, and instinct with life and breath. For his "English histories" he follows Holinshed's Chronicle, and also those of Grafton and Stow; for his Roman histories, Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's "Lives"; for his other plays he consulted the romances of the Middle Ages, and the Old English plays and ballads he loved so well.

Shakespeare's *non-dramatic writings* consist of the poems *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, and a large group of very fine *Sonnets*. The sonnet form employed by Shakespeare has been spoken of (p. 48). The subject is, mainly, disappointed friendship and unrequited love, and it is thought the sonnets are of an autobiographical nature, and refer to some bitter time of disappointment and sorrow in the poet's life. The "Passionate Pilgrim," which contains some very fine stanzas, has often been ascribed to Shakespeare, but without much foundation.

The greatest name among Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors is that of *Ben Jonson*. He is also the best repre-

Classical Drama.

sentative of the school of dramatists that still kept closely to classical models, in contradistinction to the "romantic school," represented by Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger. The "conventional" or "classical" school adhered strictly to the unities of time, place, and action, in the composition of their plays. No events must be brought in which could not have taken place between sunrise and sunset of the day of performance, the place of action must only vary within very narrow limits, and the action itself must be simple, "one and undivided," and not complex. It is on this last unity that

Aristotle insists; and in the Greek drama, where the action was confined to the "catastrophe," which must be limited as to time and place, these unities were almost essential. They were, however, with the Greeks, especially in the comedies of Aristophanes, often set aside, and never more rigorously observed than in the sixteenth-century revivers of the classical drama. The Romantic School, on the other hand, rejected the mechanical form of the Greek play, and spent their energies in the skilful working out of plots and delineation of character. They took their plots from the romances of the

Romantic School.

Middle Ages, the whole story was translated into action, and the audience might see the man's career from his cradle to his grave, or the rise and fall of a nation, without for a moment being struck by anything ludicrous in the quick transitions of time and place. Sidney has ridiculed the "romantic" play in his "Defence of Poesie," both in its disregard for the "unities" and its mixture of light and serious tones, "their mongrel tragi-comedy," as he terms it; but, nevertheless, English taste has always declared itself in favour of the greater power, scope, and freedom gained by those writers who boldly broke free from the shackles of the classical drama, and created a free and essentially English style of dramatic composition. Shakespeare in one play only, "The Tempest," follows strictly the classical model.

Ben Jonson was born in London of humble parentage, and was educated at Westminster by the generosity of the historian

Camden. On leaving school, he seems for a

Jonson, 1574-1637.

time to have followed his stepfather's trade, bricklaying, and then to have enlisted as a soldier and served in the Low Countries. He may have studied at St. John's College, Cambridge, when he gave up his soldier's life, but this is very uncertain. He was a man of great and varied genius; there is hardly any branch of learning of which we do not find evidence in his plays. He soon associated himself with the stage, both as an actor and a writer. On the accession of James I. he got plentiful employ-

ment as a writer of "masques," and in 1619 was made Poet Laureate. Ben Jonson is said to have refused knighthood, and no amount of Court favour caused him to sacrifice independence and self-respect. "Poets were rarer births than Kings," he is reported to have told James, and from such a tongue we should not expect flattery. In 1619, also, he paid a memorable visit to the great Scotch poet, Drummond of Hawthornden, who has left us some account of Jonson.

His last years were marked by ill-health and some decline of power in writing, but he still continued to exercise great influence in the literary world of his day. At the Mermaid Tavern, where the wits of the early Stuart period held their meetings, Jonson reigned as autocratic a sovereign as if he claimed "divine right" itself, and young poets strove zealously to get entrance to his presence, and to be "sealed of the tribe of Ben."

In 1637 Jonson died. There was much talk at first of a handsome monument in Westminster Abbey. Finally it was left for a friend and admirer to erect a tablet to his memory, on which had been cut, at small cost, the appropriate epitaph: "O rare Ben Jonson!"

Jonson's was an honest, straightforward nature, a little pedantic and stiff-necked in his opinions, but a man too really large-minded and generous to have harboured the envy of his great contemporary, Shakespeare, of which he has been accused. If he has told us that Shakespeare had "small Latin and less Greek," it is he, also, who gave us the noblest ode written to his memory: "He was not of an age, but of all time."

Jonson's earliest work was not strictly classical in form, but in 1596 he struck the new note, and from henceforth followed rigorously classical models. *Every Man in his Humour* is considered by many his masterpiece; it was a satirical comedy. In *Every Man out of his Humour* and *Cynthia's Revels* the satire turns on the follies of London society, and is bitter in tone. In the *Poetaster* the satire becomes almost invective,

Early
Group of
Comedies,
1596-1601.

and is aimed at the inferior poets of the time. Dekker, who is distinctly aimed at, answered, in 1602, by the "Satiromastix, or Scourge for the Satirist." A later group of comedies consists

**Later
Group of
Comedies,
1605-1611.**

of *Volpone the Fox*, in which the typical miser is the hero, *Epicene*, the *Silent Woman*, the *Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair*. This last play is a bitter satire upon the Puritans, such an attack as became very common on the stage, and not unnaturally led to the shutting-up of the theatres when the Puritan party gained the ascendancy. Jonson's tragedies are *Sejanus* (1603), *Catiline* (1611), and the *Sad Shepherd*, which was never finished. Jonson's style is ponderous and pedantic; even his lightest comedies have very little wit or humour, whilst his tragedies are painstaking studies after the Roman historians, but lack the local colouring which makes Shakespeare's plays from classical sources so fascinating to us.

In his characterization Jonson struck out a new line: he began what has since been called the "comedy of humours."

**Comedy of
Humours.**

In a series of plays he delineated the "humours" of society. By "humour" Jonson meant some exaggerated peculiarity of character, either in man or woman, such as would make that individual laughable to his fellow-men. He shows us his characters as completely slaves to these ruling passions, while Shakespeare shows us the struggle going on in the average man which prevents the ruling passion from becoming so entirely dominant. The miser, as drawn by Jonson, is one in whom the greed for wealth has so prevailed that there is no place for anything else. In Shakespeare's Shylock we see the evil passion contending with love of his race, his religion, and of his own child. In another particular we see the superiority of Shakespeare. No one play is devoted to an attack on any class in society, much less to invective against individuals; but Jonson scourged the Puritans, the courtiers, and his fellow-poets unmercifully in his comedies.

Jonson has left us some charming lyrics, some written separately, but most interspersed in his plays and masques:

“Drink to me only with thine eyes”; “Slow, slow, fresh fount,
 keep time with my salt tears”; “Still to be
 neat, still to be drest,” are examples of such
 lyrics. Jonson has given us also several epitaphs famous for
 their simplicity and epigrammatic power :

“EPITAPH ON ELIZABETH L. H.

“Wouldst thou hear what man can say
 In a little ? Reader, stay ;
 Underneath this stone doth lie
 As much beauty as could die :
 Which in life did harbour give
 To more virtue than doth live.
 If at all she had a fault,
 Leave it buried in this vault.
 One name was Elizabeth ;
 The other, let it sleep in death ;
 Fitter, where it died to tell,
 Than that it lived at all. Farewell !”

“EPITAPH ON THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE.

“Underneath this sable hearse
 Lies the subject of all verse,
 Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
 Death ! ere thou hast slain another,
 Learn'd and fair and good as she,
 Time shall throw a dart at thee.”

As Ben Jonson was probably the first Poet Laureate appointed as such, with an annual salary of a hundred marks and a butt of wine, it seems well to add here some explanation of this office.

From very early times we hear of an officer, with duties something analogous, being attached to the
 Office of Court. His duties seem to have been un-
 Poet certain. Perhaps he acted as Court minstrel,
 Laureate. and was employed in celebrating the heroic
 deeds of the Sovereign.

In the fourteenth century we first hear the term “Poeta Laureatus,” as applied to a degree granted at the University

to one who showed skill in Latin versification. John Kaye, in Edward IV.'s reign, is spoken of as versifier to the King, and some think he was our first Poet Laureate, holding the University degree, and also the honour of the Court appointment. This is, however, quite uncertain. Skelton held the degree, and speaks of its being conferred by the Sovereign at the University. Chaucer, Gower, and Spenser have all been spoken of as "poets laureate," and certainly the latter had a Court annuity of £50 a year ; but it is most probable that the title in their case is complimentary, and points to them as supreme among poets, crowned with the unfading laurel such as the Greek victor wore.

The Poet Laureate has not always been the man most worthy of the first place among his fellows ; but the following are great names, which have appeared in the official ranks : Ben Jonson (1619), Dryden (1670), Southey (1813), Wordsworth (1843), Tennyson (1850-1892).

In the works of Beaumont and Fletcher the decline in the Elizabethan drama first becomes apparent. There is a tendency,

<p>Decay of Drama : Fletcher, 1576-1625 ; Beaumont, 1586-1615.</p>	<p>which becomes very strong in the Stuart period, for dramatists to make a plaything of their art, to write <i>down</i> to their audience, to revel in coarse scenes and equivocal situations, and to employ casuistry to make the "worse appear the better reason." In style, also, there is a great increase of artificiality, a craving after striking effects, which takes away from the simplicity and reality of the whole.</p>
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Yet the decline begins with some great names. *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*, who did so much of their work together, were undoubtedly men of genius, in whom much of the power and imagination of the Elizabethan school lived. The songs interspersed in their plays are charming lyrics full of fancy, and they show much skill in dramatic construction. The two men were close friends, and it is difficult to distinguish between their work. Out of fifty plays, about one-third bear evidence of joint-authorship. Fletcher survived Beaumont ten

years, during which time he was a constant play-writer. The *Maid's Tragedy*, and the *Elder Brother*, are good specimens of joint-plays. *Philaster* and the *Faithful Shepherdess* are Fletcher's alone. The latter has the honour, together with Peel's "Old Wives' Tale," of forming the groundwork of Milton's "Comus." It is a pastoral, very rich in fancy; its descriptions of Nature remind us of Spenser and Shakespeare.

George Chapman (died 1634), a scholar and a poet, best known for his spirited translation of Homer (p. 69), also produced a good many plays. His tragedies, founded chiefly on French history, revive the "tragedy of blood," in which Kyd had specially excelled among the earlier Elizabethans, and which is the direct ancestor of the modern melodrama. Dekker and Marston, both pointed at in Ben Jonson's "Poetaster," combined to write in 1602 the "Satiromastix." A dramatist who reflected, side by side with much of the sweetness and imagination of the Elizabethan school, most of the faults of the period of decay is *Philip Massinger*. His work belongs to the reign of James I. and Charles I., and the change of tone in society is marked by the daring indelicacy of much of his writing.

Still, in beauty of language and delineation of character, Massinger ranks high. The *Virgin Martyr* (1622) is the adaptation to the stage of the story of Dorothea, a Christian maiden who suffered martyrdom during the Diocletian persecution, and whose death converted the Roman Governor.

The *New Way to Pay Old Debts* is the cleverest of Massinger's comedies, and Sir Giles Overreach has become quite a proverbial character. *City Madam* is a clever and amusing little play, dealing with the airs and graces of a newly-made City knight and his wife.

Webster and *Ford* are both tragic dramatists of some power. Ford's best work is the *Broken Heart*.

John Shirley (1594-1666) has been named the last of the Elizabethans. He was a schoolmaster and an industrious play-writer. When the Puritans closed the theatres in 1642, Shirley's occupation was gone, but he lived on through the

“hard times” to see the Restoration and the stage again asserting its supremacy. He had something of the sweetness of the Elizabethan writers, but little of their vigour and power. As a lyric poet he stands very high. The masques which he wrote in abundance for the Court of Charles I. are full of graceful songs.

PERIOD V

STUART LITERATURE TO THE RESTORATION

Early Stuart literature—Metaphysical style—Spenserian poets—Religious poets—Lyrist—Transition poets: Waller, Denham, Cowley—Stuart prose writers: Milton, Marvell.

LOVE of Queen and country had formed the great uniting spirit so necessary to true poetry. When Elizabeth died, the elements held together by such ties fell apart. Strife, political and religious, soon distracted the country, and literature suffered; for, as we have seen, it is the written thought of the age, and though at its best it is beyond its age, yet it must also reflect that age.

Poetry suffered also in the early Stuart period from the effects of Euphuism, which were more lasting in poetry than in prose. The early Euphuists used this somewhat affected and pedantic style to cover a great deal of real thought and of bright imagination. As time went on, writers thought too much of the fantastic style or form, and too little of the thought which should underlie that form. Ideas were sacrificed to some new and far-fetched mode of expression.

Sometimes the same letter or word must be repeated at regular intervals, sometimes the poems must be written in shapes of wings, horns, pillars, hearts, and so on, and the metre must be sacrificed to suit the shape of the stanza! Even the earnest poetry of thoughtful men like George Herbert, for example, is spoilt by these fanciful tricks, and we can easily

imagine what would be the result of such a fashion on those who were not thoughtful.

Dr. Johnson has given the name of the "metaphysical" school to these writers, in whom the intellect has gained supremacy over feeling, who are full of "fantastic wit," and always willing to sacrifice thought to the expression of a brilliant and ingenious "conceit." The characteristics of the school appear in the poetry of such writers as Donne and William Browne.

John Donne was Dean of St. Paul's in 1621. His writings are numerous and varied in subject—sermons, love-poems, elegies, epigrams, and satires. It is on the last that his fame chiefly depends. He carries his passion for the fantastic to a most exaggerated extent, and employs far-fetched allusions and remote comparisons until it is almost impossible to distinguish his original meaning.

William Browne (1588-1643) revives the pastoral in his "Britannia's Pastorals," 1613. He is a warm admirer of Spenser, whose influence is clearly seen in his poetry. As a narrative poet Browne fails, but he has great descriptive power, and his genuine love of the country, with all its sights and sounds, make his work very charming to us. He celebrates Spenser and Sidney. The following passage from his praise of Spenser will serve to illustrate his style, as well as his genuine admiration for his great master :

"But ere he ended his melodious song
An host of angels flew the clouds among,
And rapt this swan from his attentive mates,
To make him one of their associates
In heaven's fair quire, where now he sings the praise
Of Him that is the first and last of days !"

Spenser's spirit and style found warm imitators in two brothers, *Phineas* and *Giles Fletcher*. Phineas was the author of

the *Purple Island* (1633), in which, under an allegorical form, he gives an elaborate description of the body of man : the veins and arteries are the streams and rivers ; the bones, the hills, and so on. Five cantos are devoted to physical nature, and

Phineas
Fletcher,
1584-1650.

then follows an allegory of the mind. Intellect is a Prince, attended by eight counsellors—the five senses, with fancy, memory, and common-sense. The fortress of Intellect is attacked by vices, and saved by an angel, who bears the form of James I., a piece of bald flattery to the King and his intellectual sympathies. Isolated passages of the “Purple Island” are really fine, but the allegory is forced and unnatural.

Giles Fletcher (1588-1623) is a religious poet. His great work is *Christ's Victory and Triumph in Heaven and Earth over and after Death*, which for its rich imagination, melodious expression, and genuine religious feeling, ranks high among religious poems, and reminds us of Spenser and Milton. The latter certainly studied and appreciated Giles Fletcher.

George Wither (1588-1667), a versatile writer, has given us satires, lyrics of exceptional sweetness, religious poems, and pastorals. He was an Oxford man, who began his literary career with a satire on the abuses of the time—*Abuses Stript and Whipt*—which was so displeasing at Court that the author was thrown into prison, where he produced *The Shepherd's Hunting*, a pastoral poem. On his release he formed a close friendship with Browne, and wrote with him *The Shepherd's Pipe*. In religious poetry we have *Songs and Hymns of the Church* and *Hallelujah*. Wither became an ardent party leader for the Parliamentary cause, and was also strongly Puritan in sympathy. His versification is musical, and the thought expressed is full of tenderness and beauty.

In his true love of poetry he is no Puritan :

“And though some, too, seeming holy,
Do account thy raptures folly,
Thou dost teach me to contemn
What makes knaves and fools of them.”

Among his lyrics everyone knows and appreciates,

“Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?”

The extravagances of the later Euphuists, or metaphysical writers, are perhaps more clearly illustrated by reference to a

group of religious poets, of which *George Herbert* may be considered the chief.

“Holy Herbert” was born in 1593. His elder brother, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, was a writer, a man of philosophic thought. George was educated at Westminster

and Cambridge, and became Public Orator of the University. He took Holy Orders, and was appointed to the living of Bemerton, near Salisbury. Here he lived the life of an ideal

parish priest, a life which has been made known to us by Walton. The life and character of Herbert has always seemed the practical realization of Chaucer’s Poor Parson and the anticipation of Goldsmith’s picture of the parish clergyman of “Sweet Auburn.” His high ideal of his office, his devotion to the bodily and spiritual needs of his flock, his strict self-discipline, his tenderness to the erring, we can trace in his writings. Herbert died young, of consumption, in 1632. His verses are purer than the ordinary Cavalier lyric, but are like them in sweetness and pathos, like them, too, in some of their faults of style. No one can accuse Herbert of want of thought and earnestness; but the thought would often be clearer and more forcible if it were not for the fantastic form in which it is clothed or the wealth of illustration by which it is obscured. Herbert’s love of music was very strong; he himself sang to the lute, and twice a week walked to Salisbury Cathedral, to enjoy the musical daily service. His poems, collected under the title of *The Temple*, were published in 1631. His prose treatise, *The Priest to the Temple, or the Country Parson*, which he wrote to remind himself how a clergyman should live and act, was added to this collection later. Some of the most charming of his poems are *Virtue*, *Sunday*, *The Pulley*, *The Elixir*, whilst the longer poems, *Providence* and *The Church Porch*, have some fine stanzas mixed with some of very unequal merit.

Herbert wrote a few of those foolish things—shaped poems; *Easter Wings* and *The Altar* are of this type. The extravagant use of illustration may be seen in such a poem as *Prayer*. The

following is one of three short verses, each equally overlaid with similes, until the original thought is almost lost :

“ Engine against th’ Almighty, sinner’s tower,
 Reversed thunder, Christ’s side-piercing spear,
 The six-days’ world transposing in an hour,
 A kind of tune which all things hear and fear.”

Fantastic conceits are numberless, as, *e.g.* (from “The Church Floor”) :

“ Death, puffing at the door,
 Blows all the dust about the floor ;
 But while he seeks to spoil the room, he sweeps.”

His love of an epigram appears in—

“ Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
 Like seasoned timber, never gives ;
 But tho’ the whole world turns to coal,
 Then chiefly lives !”

In such poems as “Paradise,” meaning and poetry are sacrificed to the fancy for forming an *anagram*, and we get such devices as :

“ Inclose me still, for fear I start ;
 Be to me rather sharp and tart,
 Than let me want Thy hand and (he)art !”

Two other Cambridge men and religious poets were Richard Crashaw and Henry Vaughan.

Crashaw, a man of very devout life, produced a good deal of religious poetry, thoughtful in substance, sweet in expression, but often spoilt by “conceits.” He joined the Roman Catholic Church in 1644, and died at Loretto two years later.

Steps to the Altar, a collection of his chief poems, was published in 1646.

His epigram of the Marriage at Cana in Galilee has a force not easily forgotten :

“ The conscious water saw its God and blushed ”;

and there are some sweet lines in his lyrical verses entitled “Wishes.”

Vaughan was the author of *Silex Scintillans*, or "The Flint giving forth Sparks."

In the poems of *Francis Quarles* (1592-1644) we find the same lively fancy and quaint humour of expression combined with decided Puritan tendency, though he was a Royalist. His "Book of Divine Emblems" became very popular; other poems are *Mors Tua, Feast of Worms, The Vanity of the World*.

The Book of Divine Emblems is full of quaint conceits. He illustrated the book himself, and the engravings are full of grotesque fancy. A skeleton, through whose ribs a tiny human figure is seen to be peering, illustrates the text, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And Milton, perhaps, is thinking of this illustration when he writes in "Comus":

"I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death."

A great deal of the poetry of this early part of the seventeenth century was lyric in form. Short songs and poems,

Lyric Poetry.

expressing emotion called up by the circumstances of the time, abound. Some of this poetry breathed religious devotion, as with Herbert, Crashaw, or Quarles; some loyalty to the Sovereign, as in the Cavalier poets *Lovelace, Suckling, and Habbington*. Charles I. was not personally encouraging to poets, but poetry was certainly cultivated more by those on his side in politics. The extreme Puritans were strongly opposed to poetry, yet the greatest poet of the age, Milton, was a Puritan.

Much of the Cavalier poetry is light and trifling—love-songs, Court poems, and so on; a great deal of rubbish, with every now and then a gem among the trash; sometimes a musical lyric which redeems the whole; sometimes a single stanza of musical sweetness. Such are Suckling's "Why so pale and wan, fond lover?" or "Constancy," and Lovelace's

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more;"

or, better still,

“Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage ;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage.
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.”

But the best example of a lyrical genius is *Robert Herrick*. He has been ranked next to Shelley for pure musical gift of song. He was the leader of that band of

Herrick, young poets who gathered around Jonson,
1591-1674. and thought themselves happy in being sealed of the “tribe of Ben.” The circumstances of his life were almost ideal for the production of poetry. Fourteen years were spent at Cambridge, and twenty years in a quiet Devonshire vicarage, Dean Priors. Political unrest, which did so much to silence the voice of poetry, did not affect his life until his later days, when he had ceased to rhyme. In 1649 he lost his living, and came to Westminster, where he was supported by Royalist friends. At the Restoration he was reinstated at Dean Priors, and died there in 1674.

He has left us two collections of poems, *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers*.

“*Hesperides*” is a collection of many short poems, breathing country life and simple pleasures, the beauty of Nature and the quaint customs of village folk. He describes the scope of his work himself :

“I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers ;
I sing of maypoles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes ;
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.
I write of youth, of love.”

“Daffodils,” “Cherry Ripe,” “Rosebuds,” “Blossoms,” are among some of the most charming ; while some of his expressions have become household words : “A wild civility,” “Thou art . . . the very eyes of me.”

Epigrammatic power is shown in such lines as,

"Love is a circle, that doth restless move
In the same sweet eternity of love,"

and also in parts of "Thanksgiving," which also breathes some warm devotional feeling.

Herrick tried a great variety of metres, but he succeeds in all, and he never falls into the prevailing fault of writers of the day, and sacrifices beauty to intricacy and oddity of verse-form.

Three writers specially mark the transition stage from the later Elizabethan (as it is sometimes called) or the Stuart period, to the period of the Restoration, with Dryden as its chief figure. These are Waller, Denham, and Cowley—men who are free from the chief defects of the metaphysical, yet without the merits of the romantic, school.

Edmund Waller, born 1605, led a restless, eventful life. Though connected with Cromwell by marriage, he was more inclined, by taste and disposition, to take up the

Waller, 1605-1687. Royalist cause; but he was not true to either side, and for his share in a plot (known thenceforth as Waller's plot) against the Parliament, who were reposing some trust in him, he had to go into exile. Later he made his peace with Cromwell, and returned. He wrote a panegyric on the Great Protector, but was ready to celebrate the praises of Charles II. on his Restoration in flattering terms. When Waller was reproached with the superior merit of the poem on Cromwell, he is said to have characteristically replied: "Poets succeed better in fiction than in truth." He took his place in several Parliaments under Charles II., was made Provost of Eton, and died at an advanced age in 1687.

Waller was a very popular poet with his contemporaries and immediate successors, but it is a popularity which has not been confirmed by later ages. Yet in certain respects Waller was an innovator, and claims merit for originality. Dryden says of him, that "excellence and dignity of rhyme were never fully known till Mr. Waller taught it; he first made

writing easily an art." Long before Dryden wrote with grace and ease, long before Pope perfected the heroic couplet, and gave it that inimitable finish and polish, Waller had rehearsed this art of "writing easily," had adopted the French fashion of writing in couplets, the sense being made to end with the line or couplet, and had discarded "enjambement," or the carrying on of the meaning into the next line—a practice which Dryden remarks, in the verse of those before him, runs on for so many lines together that the reader is out of breath to overtake it.

His longest poem is *Of Divine Love*, in six cantos, and a series of love-poems called *Sacharissa* celebrate his courtship of Lady Dorothy Sidney. All his work is elegant and polished, but there is little or no fire of inspiration in it.

Every now and then we have a charming song, as "Go, lovely Rose," or "The Girdle," which breathes something more attractive than the rigid commonplaceness of most of his work.

Waller's work, however, is interesting in the history of literature, as pointing to the coming predominance of style over feeling, passion, or thought.

For some time Waller was without disciples in his new style. Quite twenty years later we see the first results in the work of *Sir John Denham*. He also belonged to the

Denham,
1615-1688.

Royalist side, lived to see the Restoration, and took a prominent part in public affairs. Like Waller, he produced very little in amount, but industriously worked at that little to produce an effect of polish and smoothness. He adopted the couplet, and studied to introduce with good effect antithesis. Pope afterwards achieved this successfully, and it became a distinctive trait in the poetry of his school. The monotony of each line is broken by a cæsura, or pause. His chief works were *The Sophy*, a tragedy; *Cooper's Hill*, a description of scenery on the banks of the Thames, as viewed from Cooper's Hill. Dr. Johnson praises this latter as the first "local poem."

The often-quoted lines on the course of the Thames give us

a good example of the distinctive marks of the new style of poetry. We have the heroic couplet, the sense terminating with the couplet, antithesis, and the cæsura :

“Oh, could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme !
Though deep, yet clear ; though gentle, yet not dull ;
Strong without rage ; without o’erflowing, full.”

Abraham Cowley, born 1618, was educated at Westminster and Cambridge. He took up the Royalist cause, and went into exile with the Court, during part of this time acting as secretary to the Queen. He returned at the Restoration, and lived his last years at

Cowley,
1618-1667.

Barnes and Chertsey, where he died in 1667. His chief works are *The Mistress*, a collection of love-verses ; a series of Pindaric odes ; *Davideis*, an epic on the troubles of David ; and a miscellaneous collection of short poems, among which the finest is the lament on the death of Crashaw. His love-poems are as unreal and frigid as Waller’s, but, unlike his, full of “conceits” and effects of ingenious “wit” writing. Addison, in one of his Essays on Wit (No. 62), quotes from Cowley in giving examples of mixed wit, which consists partly in the resemblance of words and partly in that of ideas. His merits are his real learning and his calm and clear judgment, and as in his faults he illustrates the decay of the early romantic school, in his virtues he heralds the dawn of the new “conventional” age, which was to excel in clearness of reasoning, common-sense, and lucid expression. There are some fine passages in the ode on Crashaw, but fanciful conceits appear again in :

“How well, blest swan, did fate contrive thy death,
And make thee render up thy tuneful breath
In thy great mistress’ arms, thou most divine
And richest offering of Loretto’s shrine !
Where, like some holy sacrifice t’ expire,
A fever burns thee and love lights the fire.”

Cowley’s essays are, as a rule, much more natural in style than his poems. They are interspersed with verse, deal with

a variety of subjects—avarice, gardening, shortness of life, Oliver Cromwell, and one gives an interesting picture of an ideal college. They mostly dwell on the happiness of a quiet life, and reflect the studious retirement of the last few years of the poet's existence.

The prose of the Stuart period exhibits much the same characteristics as the poetry, but frees itself more quickly from the extravagances of the later Euphuism. **Prose of Period.** *James I.* himself was an author of extensive knowledge which displays itself in pedantry, but of little originality. His *Demonology* is interesting in showing us the hold which belief in witchcraft still had over men's minds, and the result of his interest in the subject was the passing of severer enactments on the subject; and we find wiser men than James—Sir Matthew Hale and Sir Thomas Browne—seriously acting on some of the suggestions laid down in the book and embodied in the law.

In his *Basilikon Doron*, or "Gift of a King," he gives his son, the Prince of Wales, excellent advice on his duty towards God and his subjects—a striking example, in his case, of how far practice can be divorced from precept.

In 1621 appeared a prose work with the extraordinary title of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, and ascribed to "Democritus Junior." Under this name *Robert Burton* has given us his varied and quaint thoughts upon the subject of melancholy. Burton was educated

Burton,
1578-1640. at Christ Church, Oxford, and became a clergyman. After a slight sketch of various brain maladies, he passes on to treat of melancholy in general. He examines its causes, whether from inheritance, injudicious treatment, or external influences, such as climate; he then passes to symptoms, such as overexcitement or depression, and suggests some prescriptions. Among these he recognises the importance of air, exercise, and careful diet, but he also advises the use of various charms.

In language the "Anatomy" is quaint, and full of illustrations. No book can compare with it for the number of quotations introduced, some of them from such remote sources as

to be quite unfamiliar to the ordinary reader. But perhaps the most interesting feature in the "Anatomy" is the almost prophetic language in which Burton speaks about the then unknown science of geology. He would like to know, he says, how all manners of stones have been formed in the past, to trace the effects of volcanic disturbances on the earth's crust, to know why there are found far inland the remains of sea-organisms and sea-formed rocks.

The *Anatomy of Melancholy* has had its warm admirers in Dr. Johnson, Coleridge, and, above all, Charles Lamb. To Burton's memory a statue has been raised in Christ Church Cathedral; the inscription at the base of this statue states that the death of "Democritus Junior" took place on the very day he had himself predicted, and the horoscope is engraved beneath it.

Thomas Browne, born in 1605, was educated at Winchester and Oxford, studied medicine, and lived the last forty-five years of his life as a physician at Norwich. He kept apart from the political strife of his age, and was knighted by Charles II. in 1671.

Sir Thomas Browne,
1605-1682. By nature he seems to have been singularly simple and straightforward, and this appears in his works, coupled with the display of a vast amount of out-of-the-way learning, which would be pedantic in the extreme in a less natural writer. His style is full of Latinisms, and overlaid with far-fetched similes and illustrations.

The subjects he chooses are miscellaneous and unusual. *Urn Burial*, *The Garden of Cyrus*, a *Treatise on the Quincunx*, or art of arrangement by fives, the existence of which Browne discovers in the earth, the air and water, and in the human soul itself.

But he is best known by the *Religio Medici*, in which he reveals his own personal feelings and thoughts. It seems difficult to reconcile with his wide-minded and thoughtful confession of the foundation on which his faith rested, the fact that he believed in witchcraft and demonology.

The fashion of "character writing" became popular after

the appearance of *Sir Thomas Overbury's Characters* in 1614.

**Character
Writers.**

The idea is borrowed from an old Greek writer, Theophrastus. The characters are described in a series of short sentences, quaint and pithy. The pedantry of the age is shown in the title chosen by *Earle*, Bishop of Salisbury, for his book of characters, published in 1628, *The Microcosmography*. The same idea is carried out in verse in *Bishop Hall's* satires, *Virgidemiarium*, or "The Gathering of Rods," in which, after satirizing professions, institutions, and customs of the day, he descends to individuals, and reviews the dandy, soldier, or squire of his day.

Quite the most interesting and original of these "character" writers was *Thomas Fuller*. His works are full of playful

**Fuller,
1608-1661.**

humour, quite free from bitterness. He is also a typical "writer of conceits"—not one of the ponderous forgers who set themselves to produce in each line some fresh simile more far-fetched and obscure than the last, but one of the ingenious originators who, with a healthy freedom from effort, pours out his abundant supply of witticism.

In *The Holy State* the typical character is drawn, but in each case it is associated with that of a real individual. Abraham becomes the type of the good parent, Augustine the good Bishop, Monica the ideal mother, Lady Jane Grey the perfect Court lady. Many of Fuller's pithy sayings are admirable: A negro is the "image of God cut in ebony"; Ridley's life was a "noble letter, writ by a noble hand, and of which a noble death was the seal"; a worthy Court lady is one "who does not so much compose her face by the glass as she does her mind by God's Word, which, according to St. Paul, is the most perfect glass."

In the *Worthies of Great Britain* Fuller writes some account of great Englishmen under their respective native counties.

A Pisgah Sight of Palestine gives a survey of Palestine and Egypt, as if seen from Mount Pisgah.

The Holy War is a history of the Crusades.

Fuller is an example of how a style overladen with conceits

and antitheses and illustration can yet be interesting and fascinating in the hands of a writer of originality and real learning.

Among the theological prose-writers *Jeremy Taylor* stands pre-eminent. He was born in 1613 at Cambridge, where he was educated at the Grammar School and Caius College. In the Civil War he took the Royalist side, and was at one time chaplain to the King's

forces. He twice suffered imprisonment at the hands of the Parliament. At the Restoration he was given an Irish bishopric, Down and Connor, and ended his days there looking after the affairs of his diocese with the greatest diligence. He died in 1667.

Taylor's writings are distinguished by sweetness and eloquence; he has the faults of style of the metaphysical school, but nothing can surpass the melody of his prose, and his vivid imagination and picturesque power have made him often be compared with Spenser and Shakespeare. His *Holy Living and Dying* is a perfect treasury of Christian precept and prayer, and breathes a spirit of most sincere devotion. Such passages as the following illustrate his imaginative power and eloquence, rising as they do above the region of prose into the rhythm of real poetry.

"For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest than it could recover by the liberation and frequent weighing of his wings, till the little creature was forced to sit down, and pant and stay till the storm was over, and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing as if it had learnt music and motion from an angel, as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministries here below; so is the prayer of a good man."

Very different from *Jeremy Taylor* in training and opinions was *Richard Baxter*, a divine who left the English Church for

Presbyterianism. He suffered bitter persecution for his Non-conformity, being one of the victims of the savage Judge Jeffreys; but even from his prison cell he poured forth works marked by the sincerest religious devotion and a genuine spirit of toleration. *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* was much prized by Baxter's own generation.

Puritan thought entering into and influencing literature naturally leads us to the name of its greatest exponent, John

Milton. Milton has been called sometimes the last of the Elizabethans. As a matter of fact, he belongs to no group of poets; he stands alone in his greatness, just as unapproachable

our Great Classic. in the realm of exalted and sublime poetry as Shakespeare is in the realm of dramatic composition and characterization. He is our great "classic," not classical in the sense in which we term Ben Jonson or Pope classical, as either following rigorously the literature of classical times or as writing according to clearly-laid-down rules of composition, but in the sense in which we call Homer, Æschylus, and Dante among the poets, Beethoven and Mendelssohn among musicians, and Raphael and Michael Angelo among artists classical, as having done work which is of the highest and best, work in which there is the true ring of immortality, because it appeals to what is highest and best in human nature, and also because such men have chosen subjects which are of eternal interest, and have treated them in the best way possible. Such work stamps the author as of the highest *class*, a real classic, and nothing else can do so.

Milton seems to have had from childhood a clear realization of the great powers given to him, and to have formed a firm resolution never to use them for anything but a noble purpose. The concluding lines of his earliest sonnet, written at the age of twenty-three, may almost be taken as the keynote of his life :

" All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye."

John Milton was born in 1608, son of a scrivener residing in

Bread Street, London. His early home-training was strict and careful. His father was a strict Puritan,

Milton,
1608-1674. but an ardent musician, and the boy was brought up in deep reverence for the Bible and

for music; the influence of both is strongly marked in his poetry. He was sent to St. Paul's School about 1620, where he formed a close friendship with Charles Diodati. During his school-days he produced paraphrases of two of the Psalms (cxiv. and cxxxvi.). In 1625 he was admitted as pensioner to Christ's College, Cambridge. His college career was not a very happy one; he was probably rusticated owing to a disagreement with his tutor, but as he was allowed to return very soon, and was placed under another tutor, it is thought that the offence was not looked upon as a very serious one by the authorities. He left behind him a reputation for highmindedness and purity, which, together with his unusual physical beauty, is kept alive in the nickname conferred on him—"the Lady of Christ's." He left Cambridge after taking his M.A. degree in 1632. Several short poems are ascribed to this college period, the most famous of which is *The Ode on Christ's Nativity*, produced on the Christmas Day of 1629. This poem was intended as the first of a series of religious poems, two of which, *The Circumcision* and *The Passion*, were produced shortly after. The "Ode" is a fine poem, suggesting at once some of the characteristic beauties of Milton's style, vigour, sweetness, and dignity. It also has

Ode on the
Nativity. strongly marked that curious blending of mythological and Christian illustrations so noticeable in Spenser and afterwards in "Paradise Lost." The wonderful image of the pure serenity of holiness called up by the last verse has never been surpassed:

"But see the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest,
Time is our tedious song should here have ending;
Heaven's youngest teemèd star
Hath fix'd her polish'd ear,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harness'd Angels sit in order serviceable."

An epitaph to Shakespeare belongs to this same period, and is a noble tribute to his memory :

"Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a live-long monument."

After leaving college, Milton retired to Horton, where his father had settled and spent some years in study and retirement. Milton's father was probably disappointed that his son had not accepted a University Fellowship, or at least chosen to train for some profession. In a letter written about 1632 Milton states clearly that his apparent inactivity is from high motives and with a definite purpose, to prepare himself by study, thought, and meditation, for the great work which he feels is before him. "He that would not be frustrate in his hope to write hereafter of laudable things must be himself a true poem." The poet's own being was reflected in his poetry, so this time of preparation must be spent in fitting himself to use aright his great gift.

Milton's literary life has been called a drama in three acts. The first of these began with his college poems, and ends with

Three Periods.

the close of his five years' retirement at Horton ;
the second begins after an interval of three or
four years, the first part of which was spent on
the Continent, and comprises his prose works ; the third begins
after the Restoration, about 1662, and ends with the poet's
death in 1674, and contains "Paradise Lost," "Paradise
Regained," and "Samson Agonistes." To the Horton period
belong several sonnets, the beautiful twin poems *L'Allegro* and
Il Penseroso, the masques of *Arcades* and *Comus*, and *Lycidas*.

"L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" give us companion pictures of the poet's mind, of what he is thinking and feeling, not in one mood only, but in contrasting moods.

"L'Allegro," Milton shows in them how to a true mind there
"Il Penseroso," 1632. is a response to the bright cheerfulness of life,
a chord which harmonizes with the "L'Allegro"

music in Nature, and also a response to its sadder side, a sympathy with the solemn notes of its music. Milton may

have had in his mind the Cavalier and Puritan type of character; if so, he shows that he can appreciate what was best in each type. Milton's Puritanism has nothing of stern narrowness in his early poems. We next find him a writer of masques, a masque being a combination of light poetry, dancing, and music, such as the strict Puritan would abhor.

In "Comus" Milton showed again that pure joyousness was quite compatible with religious earnestness, that the most

"Comus," graceful verse, music, and dancing, could be a Masque," pure and beautiful to the pure-minded.

"Comus" was written in honour of the appointment of the Earl of Bridgwater to the Presidency of Wales. The residence was Ludlow Castle, and Milton, besides celebrating the inauguration of the new President, determined to make his poem a lesson in temperance and purity to the castle household, whose carelessness and dissipation had become a scandal in the neighbourhood. The three youngest children of the family, Lady Alice Egerton and her two brothers, were to act in the masque, and the plot is said to have been partly founded on the fact that the young people had lost their way in the woods near Ludlow. The main incident, however, of the sister separated from her brothers, and entrapped by a sorcerer, seems to be suggested by Peel's "Old Wives' Tale" (see p. 78), and to this Milton added the character of the enchanter himself, Comus, borrowed partly from the "Odyssey" and the legend of the Severn nymph, Sabrina, taken from the History of Geoffrey of Monmouth (p. 9).

The self-indulgence and fashionable drinking customs of the day are reproved by the story of Comus and his crew, and the victory of the lady through her own native purity and goodness is the triumph of virtue and self-control.

The poem has several lovely little lyrics interspersed.

This early period closes with "Lycidas," a pastoral elegy. Many great poets, Spenser notably, have looked on the pastoral form of poetry as most suitable to the poetic muse in its training time, and so Milton chose this form in which

to tell the story of the drowning of his friend Edmund King, and to lament his loss.

"Lycidas" is our first great elegy; it has been worthily followed by Shelley in his "Adonais," and Tennyson in his "In Memoriam." Tennyson himself called "Lycidas" a touchstone for poetic taste. The eighteenth-

1637.
century poets, critics of an age of "light without love," condemned it, for they could not understand it, and they cavilled at its inconsistencies and incongruities and lost sight of its beauties. There is always something a little artificial in the pastoral form, and we feel that the poet is somewhat trammelled by the form he has chosen, but in three grand passages Milton rises far above his theme. The first of these is when he answers the doubts and fears which might occur to any thoughtful mind at the cutting short of such a career as King's:

"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil."

Then, again, when he laments the loss which King (who was about to take Holy Orders) must be to the Church, and speaks words of warning and reproach to the greedy and faithless pastors of God's flock. And finally in the last grand passage, when he bids men take comfort in the thought that there is no such thing as death for Lycidas, for he,

"Sunk low, but mounted high
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves."

"Lycidas" has something of the nature of a transition poem. It has the sweetness and somewhat of the brightness and hopefulness of the early poems; it also has much of the sternness and the sublimity of his later work. The concluding words of "Lycidas" have been taken to indicate a determination on Milton's part to leave poetry for a time:

"To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

However this may be, we find Milton setting out for foreign travel in the April of 1638. He visited France and Italy,

which had a great attraction for him. When at Naples he received news of the political troubles in England, and resolved to return. "I considered it dishonourable," he writes, "to be enjoying myself at my ease in foreign lands whilst my countrymen at home were striking a blow for freedom." He visited Rome and Florence again on his way back, and at the latter place visited Galileo, kept a close prisoner by the Inquisition. At Geneva he heard of Diodati's death, and wrote a Latin elegy to his memory. He reached England again in August of 1639. His sojourn abroad had done much to inspire him with a passionate love of freedom, political, social, and religious, and the next twenty years were given up, with the exception of a few sonnets, to his prose writings, chiefly in the form of pamphlets attacking evils in Church and State.

The years 1641 and 1642 produced a series of pamphlets on Church reform. In these Milton takes the extreme Puritan view, and attacks Episcopal form of government.

Period II.: In 1643 Milton married Mary Powell, the Religious Pamphlets. daughter of a Cavalier country gentleman. The marriage was a most unhappy one, and his wife soon left him for her father's home. Milton found vent for his disappointment in a series of pamphlets advocating divorce. The most famous of these, *Tetrachordon*, was written in 1645, the same year as the disastrous Battle of Naseby. The Powells, ruined in consequence, sought a reconciliation, and Milton behaved with generosity towards his wife and her family, and received her back.

In 1644 had appeared his most famous prose work, the *Areopagitica*, or plea for the liberty of unlicensed printing.

"*Areopagitica*," 1644. It was written in consequence of the issuing of a strict order for the regulation of the press, by which the Long Parliament, which had taken over the censorship exercised formerly by the Star Chamber, did not seem inclined to act on any more generous principles towards the press.

Milton's is a noble protest against such curbing of the

liberty of authorship. It is an unspoken oration, full of "divine scorn for narrow dogma and paltry aims." It is addressed to Parliament, and has its name with reference to the speech of a Greek orator at Athens, in which he called on the High Court of *Areopagus* to reform itself. Its literary merit is great; the rhythm of such a passage as the following goes far beyond the scope of ordinary prose: "Truth indeed came once into the world with her Divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on; but when He ascended, and His Apostles after Him were laid to rest, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers who . . . took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since the sad friends of Truth such as durst appear . . . went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall do till her Master's Second Coming; He shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection."

The *Tractate on Education*, written the same year (1644), lays down some of the great principles of education. The end of all learning, he says, is to repair the sin of our first parents by "regaining to know God aright," and that we must by "the knowledge of sensible things arrive gradually at the knowledge of insensible and invisible." Milton defines education thus: "I call a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both public and private, of peace and war."

He then describes his ideal academy of learning, which is an interesting anticipation of much that has been done in schools and colleges of the present day. In 1649, on the death of Charles I., Milton was appointed Latin Secretary to the Council of State, and we then have from his pen a series of pamphlets in defence of the English Commonwealth.

Eikonoclastes (the Image breaker) was written in answer to

the "Eikon Basilike," or the Image of the King, professing to be the work of Charles I. in prison, but the real author of which was Dr. John Gauden. This work helped immensely in bringing about a reaction in favour of Charles, and Milton was chosen to answer it section by section. *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* is more interesting, as giving Milton's views on the struggle between King and Parliament.

In answer to a Latin treatise attacking the regicide Government, by Salmasius (Claude de Saumaise), a French professor, and the most distinguished Latinist of his day, Milton wrote, in 1651, his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*, one of the most violent and least admirable of his treatises, and it was answered in a spirit which demanded fresh controversy and invective.

The continual strain of application to this work cost Milton his eyesight. For twelve years it had been failing, and at last he was left, at the age of forty-three, totally blind, with the great work of his life not even begun. Andrew Marvell was associated with him in the secretaryship, but with the death of Cromwell, in 1658, his work for the State came practically to an end. At the Restoration he was forced to go into retirement. His political pamphlets were burnt by the common hangman, and Pope says he owed his life to the intercession of Sir William Davenant, a Royalist poet, whom Milton had befriended in 1650. Later he was left undisturbed, and thus ended the second period of his literary life.

A few remarkable sonnets belong to this period. In 1646 a poem, not in sonnet form, *On the Forcers of Conscience*, shows that Milton's hatred of intolerance in religion was not confined to those who held contrary opinions to himself. He warns the Parliament lest they should find that

Poems of
Period II.

"New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large."

The *Sonnet on his Blindness* is a very noble poem.

At his last London home in Bunhill Row most of the great epic was written, and in 1665, during a visit to Chalfont St.

Giles, in Buckinghamshire, Milton handed the completed MS. to Ellwood, and bade him read it and give his opinion. A publisher was found in 1665, who offered £20 for "*Paradise Lost*."

Ellwood is said to have remarked, on handing back the MS. of *Paradise Lost* to its author, "Thou hast said here much of *Paradise lost*; what hast thou found to say of *Paradise found*?" and that these words suggested the writing of *Paradise Regained*. It was probably begun in 1665, at Chalfont, but was not published until 1671.

Milton's last poem was *Samson Agonistes*, a drama after the Greek model, in which Milton shadowed forth his own fate and that of the Puritan party. The bitter downfall of the Puritan hopes is set forth in the ruin of the strong and gifted Samson, but in the end Samson triumphs, his victory over his enemies is in his death, and the last words of the poem seem almost an anticipation of the final triumph of the principles Milton held so dear, in the Revolution which was to prove that the Puritan party had not lived and suffered in vain.

" Oft He seems to hide His face,
But unexpectedly returns,
And to His faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously."

It seems to bring us in touch again with the Milton of the early sonnets; the work is still, as it was then, a Divine task, a "talent which is death to hide"; but he has learned through the discipline of life that the noblest service God demands is the being of the man himself, not the gift of his work. The *Sonnet to Cromwell* is a vigorous and manly eulogy, and the *Sonnet on the Massacre in Piedmont* expresses the indignation felt throughout England at the cruel persecution of the Protestant Vaudois by the Duke of Savoy.

The Restoration meant a great deal more for Milton than poverty and the loss of office; it meant the temporary wreck of the principles in which his life was bound up, and he turned from the political world, in whose interests he had been

so long absorbed, to concentrate all his powers on the great work of his life. This work had never been forgotten, even during the years of controversy. Milton was over fifty when "Paradise Lost" was definitely begun, and he was quite blind. Friends were pressed into his service for reading aloud the best authorities, not only in English, but in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The most remarkable of these was Thomas Ellwood, a young trader, between whom and Milton the strongest sympathy soon existed. Later on his daughters took part in the work, but, according to all accounts, they did not enjoy the work, and were apprenticed instead to gold and silver lace making, as more suited to their capacities.

There is an interesting Miltonic MS. preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, in which are entered the various subjects which from time to time "Paradise Lost": its Subject and Aim. had been thought of by the poet for his great epic. The Arthurian Legends were the favourite idea of his youth; then the idea of a profane subject, or a distinctively national one, was abandoned, and subjects such as "Death of St. John the Baptist," the "Passion of Christ," were considered. The "Fall of Man" appears as a suggestion when he was about thirty-two, and is finally decided on in the years of his disappointed hopes, when the battle seemed lost, and when he could look back in a spirit of sad serenity at that fall of the human race which seemed to him so typical of the departure of his countrymen from the paths of righteousness.

"Paradise Lost" is our great epic, and it fulfils Aristotle's definition of an epic. It represents one great complex action, which is treated in a dignified style and with fulness of detail. Milton concentrates the chief interest of the poem on the Fall itself, an event of universal importance, and the subject is treated with the greatest dignity and solemnity, both of style and diction. Addison, in an excellent series of papers on "Paradise Lost," in the *Spectator*, in which he revived the interest in our great epic, points out its main defects to be want of human interest and paucity of human characters,

and the too free use of minor episodes, which take away from the main action. For example, the action is suspended from midway in Book V. to the end of Book VIII., and the digression diverts attention and interest from the chief theme. But to Milton the story and its unity were nothing in comparison with the great thoughts with which his mind was full, and for which he used his story as a medium. Lowell says: "In reading 'Paradise Lost' one has a feeling of spaciousness such as no other poet gives. He showed from the first that larger view which was to be his peculiar distinction."

The poem is full of Milton's vast learning; from the storehouse of Biblical and classical erudition he drew with almost inexhaustible energy, and the whole was treated with the utmost artistic skill and with beauty of versification.

Paradise Regained, though it has had many warm admirers (Wordsworth and Coleridge among them), is inferior in interest

to "Paradise Lost." There are fewer characters, still hardly any action, and the poem resolves itself chiefly into a dialogue between Christ and the Tempter; for the subject is not the final triumph of Christ, as we should expect, but the temptation in the wilderness. The contrast brought out by Milton is between the disobedience of man's self-will and the triumph of obedience in the Saviour willingly submitting to the law for man, because His will was one with God's.

In grandeur and dignity of treatment "Paradise Regained" is in no way inferior to its great companion.

The name of *Andrew Marvell* has always been associated with that of Milton. He was born at Hull in 1621, educated

at Cambridge, and, after some years spent in foreign travel, was made Latin Secretary, under Milton, to the Commonwealth. In 1658 he was

elected Member for Hull, and held his seat until 1678. He was a most conscientious representative, sending to his constituents every day an account of the proceedings in Parliament. After the Restoration many attempts were made by the Royalist Ministers to enlist Marvell on their side, as his

keenness and ability were universally recognised ; but he was quite incorruptible, and remained in the ranks of the Opposition until his death.

His friendship with Milton would have made him most interesting, even if his personal character and ability as a writer had not already secured attention for him.

Marvell wrote satires, lyrics, and many pamphlets. His poems are unequal in merit, some of them being spoilt by the prevailing passion for ingenious conceits.

The *Lament on a Fawn* and *The Garden* are graceful lyrics, and the *Ode on Cromwell's Return from Ireland* is a fine poem, showing Marvell's characteristic fair-mindedness in his treatment of the subject. With all his admiration of Cromwell and his cause, it is Marvell who gives us the noble appreciation of Charles in that last great scene of his life, of which we may say, "Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it."

"He nothing common did, or mean,
Upon that memorable scene,
And with his keener eye
The axe's edge did try,
Nor called the gods with vulgar spite
To vindicate his helpless right ;
But bowed his comely head
Down, as upon a bed."

PERIOD VI

RESTORATION TO AGE OF POPE

Restoration period—Its characteristics—Butler—Dryden and his contemporaries—Historical and philosophical works—Bunyan—Walton—Drama.

At the Restoration, when Charles II. looked about him for a poet of correct political opinions and sufficient merit to appoint

Poet Laureate, his choice fell on *Sir William Restoration Davenant* (or D'Avenant), a man of some con-
Period, 1660 siderable learning and culture, but of no great
to c. 1740. power, and as a poet dull and pedantic. He

had written a long romantic epic entitled *Gondibert*, dealing with the age of chivalry after rather an incoherent fashion, a good many romantic plays of little merit, and some masques in which he imitates, without much success, the work of Ben Jonson.

He belonged to the same school as Cowley, Waller, and Denham, but had not their undoubted power. He was a fit Poet Laureate to preside over the inauguration of the new period, in which the intellect was to take the place of the heart, and the new critical faculty learnt by intellectual men during the exile of the Court in France was to displace poetic feeling.

The great genius who was to be the glory of the age, to reflect its spirit in strength and weakness, John Dryden, was a young man of twenty-nine, having only written two or three poems—a poet as yet quite unknown to fame.

The new critical spirit was well represented in *Samuel*

Butler in his famous "mock heroic" poem *Hudibras*. There is little known of Butler's life. He was born in Samuel Butler, 1612 at Worcester, and educated in the grammar school there. He seems to have spent some time in the household of Sir Samuel Luke, a zealous Republican and Presbyterian, and this gave him ample opportunity to study the peculiarities of the political and religious party to which, as a firm Royalist, he was keenly alive.

In 1663 he gave to the world his famous satire on the follies and fanaticism of the extreme Puritan and Republican party. The main idea seems to have been borrowed from Cervantes' "Don Quixote;" but it is treated with none of the pathetic tenderness which makes us love Cervantes' knight, while we laugh at his delusions. Butler makes us laugh at and despise all that is ridiculous and bigoted in his opponents.

Hudibras is a Presbyterian Justice of the Peace, who, with his clerk Ralpho, sallies forth on a crusade against popular amusements, and the difficulties into which this novel enterprise lead him are all related in the form of an heroic poem.

Butler shows great powers of observation, a vivid imagination, and an abundance of wit and humour. "*Hudibras*" and his other shorter miscellaneous poems give us a large number of wise saws and household words—for example,

"He that complies against his will
Is of his own opinion still,"

and,

"He that runs may fight again,
Which he can never do that's slain."

The literature of the Restoration was clearly, then, to be Royalist and anti-Puritan. Even the virtues of the Puritans were held up to ridicule, and extravagance in behaviour and mode of expression were affected lest the contrasting soberness should stamp men as Roundhead and Puritan in sympathy. No man of any literary power (with the exception of Milton

Character-
istics of the
Period.

and Marvell) appear in the ranks of the defeated party. A good deal of this Royalist enthusiasm was genuine, but much proceeded from time-servers like Waller, who had written verses in praise of Cromwell, and now was ready to vilify everything connected with the Commonwealth. French influence had given a direct impulse to the poetry of satire and criticism, and the tendency was to treat chiefly of man from the side of his intellect, whereas the Elizabethan poets had dealt with him as influenced by passion and feeling.

In style, too, there was a distinct reaction against the poetry of the metaphysical school of the later Elizabethan period, and this reaction led writers to cultivate
Change in Style. more directness and clearness in their style.

Attention to form and correctness of expression resulted from this, and there is no doubt that in insisting on these qualities as the mark of good writing the authors of the Restoration period did confer a great benefit on literature.

John Dryden, the greatest of the Restoration poets, illustrates all these special characteristics. His life is not a very eventful

Dryden,
1631-1700. one, though he lived through some stirring times. He was born in 1631, eleven years before the Civil War broke out, lived through that and the Commonwealth to see the Restoration, saw the reigns of Charles II. and James II., the English Revolution and the accession of the House of Orange, and died two years before the accession of Queen Anne.

Dryden was educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge. On leaving the University, in 1657, he came to London, prepared to take up any literary work which might offer, for he was a man of very varied intellectual power, and quite ready to grasp the requirements of the age. He associated himself with Herringman, the publisher, and soon was admitted to the first literary circles in London, which opened willingly to admit a new "wit."

On the death of Cromwell he wrote his famous panegyric, but in 1660 greeted the return of Charles II. in the *Astræa Redux*. The Restoration brought Dryden much employment

as a dramatic writer, for the stage re-opened and became most popular. In 1663 he married Lady Elizabeth Howard. They had three sons, born between the years 1665 and 1669, who were all educated, like their father, at Westminster.

In 1670 Dryden was appointed Poet Laureate, and the same year he had the office of Historiographer conferred upon him. In 1686 he became a Roman Catholic, and wrote a defence of the creed he had now chosen in his *Hind and Panther* (1687), just as five years before he had defended the position of the Church of England in *Religio Laici* (1682).

At the Revolution of 1688 Dryden's fortunes changed. He lost his Government offices and pensions, and was threatened by poverty and ruin ; but his was a brave spirit and a resourceful mind, and he took up industriously stage-writing, and finally translations and adaptations.

In spite of his reverses, he seems to have enjoyed a fairly prosperous and easy old age. Nothing could rob him of his literary ascendancy. At Will's Coffee House, the centre for the wits of his age, the younger poets listened with awe and admiration to his criticisms in literary matters, and his good-humoured wit on things in general. "Glorious John" there reigned supreme ; whatever political changes might be taking place in the outside world, the best arm-chair by the fire in the winter, and the coolest seat on the balcony in the summer, were his by undisputed right.

Dryden died on May 1, 1700, and was buried with some pomp at Westminster, his funeral expenses being defrayed by several of his distinguished friends and patrons.

Dryden was in intellect and in artistic execution infinitely superior to the writers of his age, but at the same time no

Dryden's Works. man is more representative of his own time than he. His work was so varied and so good in its different branches that his collected

works form a representation (and a very favourable one) of the whole literary movement in England for nearly half a century. The defects of his age he shared, but in a mild

form. His language was coarse, especially in his dramas, but pure compared with that of many writers of his day; a strong partisan spirit he showed in his great satires, but yet without rancour and bitterness. He was like his contemporaries in being ready to attack an opponent, but unlike them in never striking a fallen foe or attacking the reputation of a dead one. By the testimony of many who knew him, Dryden was a kindly and generous man, always ready to help on youthful aspirants to fame.

Before leaving college Dryden wrote a short poem on the death of Lord Hastings from small-pox. The poem showed promise, but was still full of the faults of the metaphysical school, and Dryden lived to speak contemptuously of this effort of his youth. In 1658 he celebrated the death of Cromwell in a poem. Dryden belonged to a Puritan family which had sympathized with the Parliamentary cause, but his chief friends were Royalist in sympathy, and he himself, though not a warm partisan, certainly inclined to the side of loyal support of the exiled Stuarts. Two years later he greeted the return of Charles II. in "*Astræa Redux*." Still, he was probably sincere in his admiration of Cromwell as a great man, and yet he may have felt convinced that the Restoration was the best thing for England. Throughout his life Dryden shows himself intensely susceptible to the opinions of those around him, and ever ready to give voice to these prevailing ideas with the specious art of persuading self and others.

The "Heroic Stanzas on Cromwell" are written in quatrains with alternate rhyme. The poem is at times very involved, chiefly through the fondness for "conceits," and is pedantic throughout.

In the "*Astræa Redux*" Dryden writes for the first time in the metre which he was to bring to such perfection, the "heroic couplet." This metre had been rehearsed, as we have seen, by Waller and Denham; under Dryden's skill as a versifier it was to become the distinctive metre for

Style and
Versifica-
tion.

poems of any length. Dryden was the first great master in the art of producing these couplets with correctness, smoothness, and sweetness. He knew how to vary the cadence so as to avoid monotony, and he wisely never abandoned altogether "enjambement," or the running on of the sense of the line. For example, after a series of couplets, we get

"So on us stole our blessed change, while we
The effect did feel, but scarce the manner see."

The poem has not yet discarded "conceits"—

"A horrid stillness first invades the ear."

In "*Annus Mirabilis*," written to commemorate the Great Fire of London and the "Dutch War" of 1666, Dryden returns to the quatrain. Considering the difficulty of the subject and the monotony of the metre, "*Annus Mirabilis*" is a fine poem, and shows that Dryden had power of vigorous description and great gift of language.

After the "*Astræa Redux*" Dryden gave himself up to writing for the drama.

With Charles II.'s return the theatres were re-opened, acting companies formed, and great pains were bestowed on all the stage accessories. Women were for the first time allowed on the stage, their place hitherto having been filled by boys. At first plays were scarce, and writers, so unaccustomed to supplying the demand for them, turned their hand to the task of translating French and Spanish plays, and adapting them to the English stage; but soon there arose a class of dramatists who supplied the need with original work. Play-writing became the most lucrative and fashionable of all forms of literature, and writers for the next half-century or so, whatever their tastes or powers, devoted themselves to dramatic production.

Thus, naturally, the new drama was not of the highest order, and very different from that which had come from the spontaneous genius of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

The times also had changed; in the corrupt society of the reign of Charles II. the coarseness of the play was no longer merely in its outer tissue of expression or occasional incident, but interwoven closely into its very existence in the plot. Vice and impurity were thus made attractive in such a way as we never find among the best of the Elizabethan dramatists.

Drama of the Restoration.

Rhyme was adopted for the drama instead of "blank verse." This change was greatly owing to French influence, and it was warmly advocated by Dryden in his *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, written in 1665. In this, among other arguments in its favour, he asserts that, as the genius of every age is different, and as the Elizabethan age excelled in blank verse, so this age was to excel in rhyme; that rhyme is helpful because it bounds and circumscribes fancy, and prevents it from outrunning judgment. As if to present a living contradiction to all Dryden's condemnation of blank verse as the language of epic and dramatic poetry, "*Paradise Lost*" was published the very same year that Dryden's essay first appeared in print. Dryden himself found out his mistake; he tired of the monotonous heroic couplet for the stage, and returned to blank verse, in 1678, in his play *All for Love*.

Dryden's best dramatic work was undoubtedly superior to that of his contemporaries, but his plays have not lived, and have exercised little influence on the modern drama. His comedies were not successful.

Dryden's Plays: Comedies.

Scott, a warm admirer of Dryden, calls them heavy, and there is nothing original and striking in his work. *Sir Martin Mar-all* is an adaptation of a French comedy; *Marriage à la Mode* is perhaps one of his most successful.

Dryden attempted some adaptations for the stage which have not brought him much fame—*The Tempest*, an absurd travesty of Shakespeare's great play; *Troilus and Cressida*; and *The State of Innocence*, an attempt to dramatize "*Paradise Lost*."

In tragedy he was more successful, and under him the "heroic play," that curious mixture of high-flown sentiment, rhetorical rant, and quite impossible situations, found its fullest development.

The *Indian Emperor*, 1665, was the first of a long series of these plays, all of them semi-historical in subject; and it was also the first to be written wholly in rhyme.

Tragedies. *The Conquest of Granada*, written in two parts, is considered the best of the heroic plays. It deals with the troubles which beset the last Moorish Sovereign of Granada, and its final conquest by Spain. It is full of unnatural situations, but the language is fine, and there are some noble passages.

Aurengzebe, 1675, was the last of Dryden's rhyming plays. In its prologue he says:

"And, to confess a truth, though out of time,
Grows weary of his long-loved mistress, Rhyme.
Passions too fierce to be in fetters bound,
And nature flies him like enchanted ground."

Thus, in "All for Love," 1678, generally considered his best tragedy, we find him finally abandoning rhyme, and explaining in the preface: "In my style I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare, which that I might perform more freely, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme."

Of the plays of his later life, after the Revolution had driven him to take up again this more lucrative work, the best is *Don Sebastian*, 1690. His last play, *Love Triumphant*, a tragi-comedy, was singularly unsuccessful; but Dryden had already announced in its prologue his intention of giving up stage-writing.

With the year 1681 we come to the second period of his literary life, marked by the production of his
Period II.: great satires and controversial poems. The
Satires, etc. long succession of heroic plays had done him good service in perfecting by practice his power of versifica-

tion. The heroic play had been mercilessly satirized by the Duke of Buckingham in his play "The Rehearsal," published in 1671. The poet "Bayes" in the play was probably first meant to represent D'Avenant, who was Poet Laureate when the poem was first planned. Buckingham substituted Dryden, who had taken the place on D'Avenant's death. All the most ridiculous points in the heroic plays of the last ten years appear in this clever satire.

Dryden did not seem to resent the allusion to himself at first, though "Bayes" became his universal nickname; but later he found means of avenging himself on Buckingham in the picture drawn of him as Zimri in *Absalom and Achitophel*. This first great political satire was aimed at Shaftesbury, the great Whig leader, who had tried to carry the Exclusion Bill of 1680-81 by raising the cry of alarm that the Church of England was in danger, and thus stirring up strong feeling against the King. The Duke of Monmouth made common cause with Shaftesbury, and became the Protestant hero of the nation. Dryden, essentially the right man in the right place, saw the situation and seized it. Taking from the Old Testament the story of the rebellion of Absalom, stirred up by the crafty counsellor Achitophel against his father David, he works out the analogy with the events before him.

Dryden is almost perfect as a satirist; there is no false working up of moral indignation over political errors; his allusions are not bitter, but most telling; he never vents mere personal spite (except in "Absalom and Achitophel." "Mac Flecknoe," where the attack was distinctly provoked), and Shaftesbury is only treated as an enemy to King and State. Dryden no doubt hoped that this poem would lead to the condemnation of Shaftesbury at his trial for high treason, just before which it was published; but this was not the case. That there was some real danger in Monmouth's ambition was shown plainly afterwards in his rebellion of 1686.

Shaftesbury, as Achitophel, is thus described :

“ A name to all succeeding ages curst :
For close designs and crooked counsels fit ;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit ;
Restless, unfixed in principles and place ;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace.”

But Dryden admits his virtues as a judge :

“ The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abbethdin
With more discerning eyes, or hands more clean,
Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress ;
Swift of despatch and easy of access.”

The versatile and unstable character of Buckingham is cleverly described thus :

“ A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome ;
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong ;
Was everything by starts, and nothing long.”

The escape of Shaftesbury from condemnation was commemorated by a medal, and Dryden wrote his second great satire, *The Medal*, 1681, to satirize this mark of popular favour.

These satires provoked a vast number of attacks, to one of which only Dryden condescended to reply.

“ The Medal of John Bayes,” by Shadwell, an inferior poet and play-writer, was a coarse personal attack on the poet, to which he responded in *Mac Flecknoe*. Flecknoe was an Irish rhymster (lately dead) who had provoked a great deal of good-natured satire in his day. Dryden now used his name as the type of an inferior poet, a sovereign in the “ realms of nonsense absolute.”

Flecknoe is anxious to choose a successor, and the choice falls on Shadwell, for he owns :

“ The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense !”

There then follows the solemn coronation of Shadwell.

Shadwell lived to succeed Dryden as Poet Laureate in 1688!

Shadwell, Settle, and other inferior poets who had attacked Dryden were satirized in the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel," published in 1682, but the greater part of this was written by Nahum Tate, with Dryden's assistance.

These four satires were followed by two controversial poems, "Religio Laici" in 1682, and the "Hind and Panther" in 1689. Dr. Johnson says of "Religio Laici"

"Religio Laici." that it is the only one of Dryden's works that may be looked on as a voluntary effusion. It

was not called forth by any special circumstances, but expressed the author's opinions on a subject which he considered interesting and important. He defends the mid-way position of the Church of England from the extreme opinions held by Roman Catholicism and Puritanism.

The death of Charles II. was celebrated by Dryden in a flattering poem, "Threnodia Augustalis," in 1685, written in the form of a Pindaric ode.

It was in 1686 Dryden became a member of the Roman Catholic Church. This has been looked upon by many as a politic act to secure Court favour under a Roman Catholic Sovereign, and not as a genuine change of opinion; but we must remember, on the other hand, that Dryden was a man with no keen sense of religion, but essentially susceptible to the spirit and influence of those around him; that in opinions he had always leaned to the side of authority, and had in the "Religio Laici" shown some pining for an infallible Church:

"Such an omniscient Church we wish indeed;

'Twere worth both Testaments, and cast in th' Creed."

Also we may naturally ask, If Dryden's change of faith was simply a matter of self-interest, why did he not return to the Church of England at the time of the Revolution? For he lost much more than by adhering to the creed he adopted than he gained by adopting it in 1686.

The "Hind and Panther" appeared as a defence of Roman

Catholicism in 1687, just a fortnight after the famous Declaration of Indulgence, by which James II. sought, "Hind and Panther." for his own ends, to conciliate Nonconformists.

It is written in three parts. Part I., which is the most able, distributes the characters of the various beasts in his fable among the different Churches and sects. The "milk-white hind," who "feared no danger, for she knew no sin," was the Roman Catholic Church; the panther, "sure the noblest next the hind," was the Church of England; the lion, who "cannot bend her, and (who) would not break," was James II.; the wolf, bear, fox, hare, represent respectively the Presbyterian, Independent, Unitarian, and Quaker; the ape, the free-thinker; and so on.

Part II. gives us the argument between the hind and panther, in which the hind shows herself strong in persuasive argument and moderate and wise in dealing with her opponent.

Part III. continues the argument, and ends with two fables. The swallow fable is told by the panther, and in it the swallows' mistake in returning before the season is fit for them, is meant to point out the mistaken trust which the Roman Catholic Church is putting in the favour and protection of James. The hind responds with the fable of the doves and the buzzard, in which is shown the folly of the English Church in rejecting James' offers of indulgence.

Of Dryden's shorter poems, the most admirable are the *Ode on Anne Killigrew*, 1686; the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, 1687; and *Alexander's Feast, or the Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, 1697.

Dr. Johnson considered the first of these the noblest ode in the language, and it is full of genuine feeling.

The odes for St. Cecilia were written by request, the one in 1687, and the other ten years later, for the annual festival held on St. Cecilia's Day. They are full of fancy and sweetness, and the last one is perhaps the most poetic thing Dryden ever wrote.

Of the translations with which he occupied his last years,

the finest is his *translation of Virgil*, finished in 1697. Dryden was not an accurate translator, but the sweetness of his versification casts a halo over his work, and made his contemporaries, at any rate, forget that he was not altogether interpreting Virgil, because he was not altogether in harmony with the spirit of the original.

Dryden
as a Trans-
lator.

Dryden's *Fables*, 1698, were free paraphrases of Chaucer and Boccaccio. To the ordinary reader of the eighteenth century Chaucer had become unintelligible, so that Dryden felt himself justified in modernizing his poems, but the undertaking seems a great failure to us now. Dryden had not the simple directness of expression so charming in Chaucer, nor the quaintness of Chaucer's language, so specially suitable to the homely tales and legends he has to tell.

In prose-writing, as in everything else he touched, so far as style was concerned, Dryden excelled. He had no direct model before him, and to him may be attributed

Dryden's
Prose.

—more, perhaps, than to any man, unless we except Sir William Temple—the formation of a modern prose style. Our earliest great prose-writers—Hooker, Bacon, Milton—were masters in their art, but their excellencies were individual; they provided no model on which the average writer could form himself. Dryden now gave men a model of style fitted for everyday use for the ordinary writer of essays, pamphlets, or histories. His prose is free from mannerisms; he has a good choice of words and a vigorous mode of expression, and, above all, a hatred of anything wanting in clearness and straightforwardness. The frequent Latinisms and parentheses, which had spoilt much of the work of his predecessors, are quite discarded by Dryden.

The *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, of which we have spoken before, appeared early in his career, and has a fine panegyric on Shakespeare, in which he says with great truth: "When Shakespeare describes anything, you more than see it: you feel it."

The *Essay on Translation*, 1685, gives some excellent principles for good translation, and also shows much critical power and discernment: "A man should be a nice critic in his mother-tongue before he attempts to translate in a foreign language . . . he must perfectly understand his author's tongue, and absolutely command his own, so that to be a thorough translator he must be a thorough poet"; and, again: "Translation is a kind of drawing after life, where everyone will acknowledge there is a double sort of likeness—a good one and a bad. . . . I dare assure them (my readers) that a good poet is no more like himself in a dull translation than his carcase would be to his living body."

A friend of Dryden's and a patron of literature was the *Earl of Roscommon*, a man of taste and judgment. He wrote

Roscom-
mon,
1634-1685. a critical poem, *Essay on Translated Verse*, in 1681, which Dryden said inspired him to try his hand on translation. The Earl of Dorset and the Earl of Rochester, both gay courtiers of Charles II.'s reign, and men of unstable character, were noted for their patronage of literature, and themselves produced satires, vigorous but coarse, and Rochester some lyrics of worth. To him is attributed the famous lines on Charles II.:

"Here lies our Sovereign Lord, the King,

Whose word no man relies on ;

Who never said a foolish thing,

And never did a wise one !"

Historical literature of the period has its best representatives in the works of *Lord Clarendon* and *Bishop Burnet*.

Edward Hyde was born in 1608. He was one of the wisest and most moderate of Charles I.'s counsellors, and he followed

the fortunes of the exiled family. At the
Clarendon,
1608-1674. Restoration he was made Earl of Clarendon, and his daughter married James, Duke of York.

He held the office of Chancellor to Charles II. until 1667, when he lost favour, and, being impeached of high treason, fled to France. He spent his last years in finishing his

"History," which had been begun in 1641, but was not published until 1702. He also wrote a reply to Hobbes' "Leviathan," and an *Essay on the Active and Contemplative Life*.

Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion* gives, in the form of memoirs of his own personal experience, the story of the eventful years 1625 to 1644, and ends with a review of the causes leading to the Restoration. The style is interesting and forcible, the tone is moderate, considering that the writer was naturally a partisan, and there is some excellent character-drawing in it.

Gilbert Burnet was, like Clarendon, too honest a politician to thrive at the Court of Charles II. On the iniquitous execution of Lord Russell, Burnet remonstrated with the King, and had to withdraw from Court.

Burnet,
1642-1715.

He became attached to the service of William of Orange, and was so valued by Mary as a spiritual adviser that he accompanied them to England in 1688, and was made Bishop of Salisbury. He was a man of high principle, and as Bishop and statesman acted a high-minded and conscientious part.

His *History of His Own Times* was published, at his own request, after his death (1723), and gives us an interesting and trustworthy account of the events in which he had been concerned. His picture of William and Mary, tinged by the prejudice of warm affection, still gives us what is manifestly the most life-like portrait we possess.

Burnet also wrote a *History of the Reformation* and the *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, which is still used as the standard commentary on the subject.

Of historical memoirs, in the form of the contemporary diary, we have two interesting specimens in the work of John Evelyn and of Samuel Pepys.

John Evelyn (1620-1706) was a country gentleman of good fortune, a man of learning and culture, and with a passion for gardening. He wrote several treatises on this favourite occupation: *Sylva*, on the cultivation of trees; *Terra*, on

gardening and agriculture. His Diary, not published until 1818, gives us a lively picture of the society of the time and the corruption of Court-life. The singular purity and refinement of his own character only help to emphasize the social degradation of the times in which he lived. Some of his personal experiences were of the most interesting: he was an eye-witness of the Great Fire of London (1666); and it was his house, Sayes Court at Deptford, which was chosen by Peter the Great as a residence during his stay in England.

Diary of
Evelyn.

A very different man was *Samuel Pepys*. Son of a London tailor, he was educated at St. Paul's, and obtained a sizarship at Cambridge. Through Sir Edward Montagu, who was connected by marriage with his family, he obtained employment in Government offices, and was finally made Secretary to the Admiralty in 1672. At the Revolution his fortunes changed, and he had to retire into private life, and died in 1703. In his work he was conscientious and hard-working.

Pepys,
1633-1703.

In the Plague year, 1665, it is said that Pepys was the only clerk in the Admiralty Office who stayed in London and carried on his work; and this devotion to duty together with his undoubted good sense redeemed much of the vanity, childish curiosity, and frivolity of the man. Again, we have a picture in his Diary of the years 1660-1669, of the corrupt state of society; but the point of view from which it is regarded by Pepys is altogether different from that taken by the dignified, scholarly Evelyn. But the picture from the gossiping pen of Pepys, with his minute description of trivialities, is most valuable in helping us to realize the Restoration age.

Philosophical and scientific prose are well represented in the Restoration period.

John Hobbes, as a Royalist, went into exile, and became

Hobbes,
1588-1679. mathematical tutor to Prince Charles. Many of his works were written during this time,

and aimed at proving a philosophical basis for despotism. At the Restoration he received a pension, and

he spent the last years of his life at Chatsworth, under the protection of the Devonshire family, to a member of which he had formerly been tutor. His famous work, *The Leviathan*, was published 1651. Man he shows to be by nature a savage being, whose passions must be restrained by arbitrary force. All his notions of right or wrong depend on self-interest; a strong despotism, therefore, is the only government which can hold man in check. Hobbes does not take into calculation the moral or emotional element in man, but tries to prove that all his nobler impulses proceed from the deliberate calculation of self-advantage. Hobbes' philosophical ideas aroused much antagonism. His last work, *Behemoth*, was a history of the Civil War from 1640 to 1660.

John Locke was educated at Westminster and Oxford, where he became tutor of his college. In 1665 he accompanied the

English Ambassador to the Elector of Brandenburg. On his return he studied medicine, but
 Locke, 1632-1704.

ill-health prevented his pursuing any profession seriously. He formed a warm friendship with Shaftesbury, who obtained him a Government secretaryship. He refused to accept the Treaty of Dover, and resigned. He afterwards joined Shaftesbury on his exile to Holland, and remained abroad until the Revolution. His chief work was his *Essay on the Human Understanding*. It is singularly clear in reasoning and in style—a good example of the correct, straightforward prose of the period.

His aim is to examine the nature of the human mind, the source and character of our ideas, and the manner in which they are presented to our consciousness. He combats the theory of innate ideas—that is to say, ideas existing independently in the mind—and traces all to sensation or reflection.

Locke uses the method of inductive reasoning, and he was the first to apply experiment to mental operations. In 1690 there appeared two treatises on *Government*, in which he defends the principles which had produced the English Revolution against the many Tory upholders of "Divine right,"

such as Sir Robert Filmer, to whose "Patriarcha" Locke's works are a direct answer.

Sir Isaac Newton was a Lincolnshire man educated at Grantham Grammar-School and at Trinity College, Cambridge. From early youth he showed remarkable mathematical power and inventive genius.

Newton,
1642-1727.

In 1669 a Cambridge professorship was offered him, and he settled down at Trinity to work out the scientific discoveries and demonstrations which have covered his name with fame. He was elected to represent his University in Parliament, but did not take an active part in public affairs. In 1695 Newton was appointed Master of the Mint, and devoted himself sedulously to the duties of this office. He became President of the Royal Society in 1703, and shortly after was knighted by Queen Anne.

He was a singularly modest, simple, and honourable man, his one defect being a certain suspiciousness of temper, which led at one time to an estrangement with Locke, who had been associated with him in public life. Owing to Locke's wise forbearance and calm judgment the breach was soon healed.

In 1678 a remarkable contribution was made to religious prose in the *Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come*. "Though there were many clever

Bunyan's
"Pilgrim's
Progress." men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two great creative minds," writes Lord Macaulay. "One of these minds produced 'Paradise Lost,' the other 'The Pilgrim's Progress.'"

This great imaginative work was produced by a Puritan tinker, *John Bunyan*, during his years of imprisonment in Bedford Gaol, where he had been committed for holding of conventicles and open-air preaching.

Bunyan was a self-taught genius. In one of his works, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, he gives us an interesting autobiography of his religious life. He was probably a wild, reckless youth, given to ale-drinking and swearing, but not so utterly vicious and depraved as he would make

us believe from his own confession. To his enthusiastic, imaginative mind the sins of his youth appear of the deepest dye in the light thrown on them after his conversion. His deep sincerity and genuine ardour gave him great power over the congregations of humble hearers whom he gathered around him. And the magic influence of this real enthusiast lived on, and will live in his great allegory of the "Pilgrim's Progress" as long as the English tongue has power.

Bunyan writes simply and naturally with much of the picturesqueness and vigour of popular idiom. His characters are as real as those of Chaucer; we feel that they were taken from the every-day life of his time. Vanity Fair must have been very real to a Puritan of Charles II.'s reign, and the scene in the court of justice when Christian and Faithful were brought to trial and brutally insulted must have surely been drawn from many a similar scene in which Bunyan himself had taken part.

The book is written in two parts, of which the first is the finer. Christian, with his burden on his back, determines to flee from the City of Destruction and to seek the New Jerusalem. His dangers and difficulties are formidable: the Slough of Despond, the attacks of Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation, the temptations of Vanity Fair, the dungeons of Giant Despair; but the help granted to him on his pilgrimage is also wonderful: the wise advice of the Interpreter, the visit to the House Beautiful, the companionship of Faithful and Hopeful.

In Part II. Christian's wife sets forth on the same perilous journey with her children, and they, too, have to undergo many of the same difficulties. At the House of the Interpreter Great-heart is appointed their guide and champion; he attacks Doubting Castle and kills grim Giant Despair, who has been the ruin of so many pilgrims. Christiana is accompanied to the brink of the River of Death by many fellow-pilgrims, but she enters the cold waters alone. To each of her friends comes in turn the same summons. The following passage, which describes the last journey of Ready-to-Halt

(one who "out of weakness had been made strong"), is a good illustration of the quaint simplicity and pathos of Bunyan's descriptions: "In process of time there came a post to the town, and his business was with Mr. Ready-to-Halt. So he enquired him out and said: 'I am come from Him whom thou hast loved and followed, though upon crutches, and my message is to tell thee He expects thee at His table to sup with Him in His kingdom the next day after Easter; wherefore prepare thyself for this journey.' . . . After this Mr. Ready-to-Halt called for his fellow-pilgrims and told them saying: 'I am sent for, and God shall surely visit you also.' So he desired Mr. Ready-to-Halt to make his will. And because he had nothing to bequeath to them that should survive him but his crutches and his good wishes, thus he said: 'These crutches I bequeath to my son, that should tread in my steps with a hundred warm wishes that he may prove better than I have done.' . . . When he came to the brink of the river he said: 'Now I shall have no more need of these crutches, since yonder are chariots and horses for me to ride on.' The last words he was heard to say were: 'Welcome life!' So he went his way." Another allegory is *The Holy War*, giving the struggle between Immanuel and Diabolus for the city of Mansoul.

Izaak Walton, a lover of Nature and a man whose writings are unique, lived to the great age of ninety years, and seems

to unite the age of Elizabeth with that of the
 Walton, Revolution. He was born in 1593, was brought
 1593-1683. up as an ironmonger, and kept a shop in Fleet
 Street for many years. It was not until he was about fifty
 that he was able to retire into the country, which he loved,
 and to devote his time to literary study and to his favourite
 art of fishing. Walton wrote his *Lives* of eminent writers
 of his day between the years 1640 and 1678. Of the five
 biographies he thus produced, the most interesting are those
 of Donne (whom he knew intimately), Hooker, and Herbert.

The Complete Angler, Walton's masterpiece, was published
 in 1653. It is written in the form of a series of dialogues

between Piscator (the fisher), Venator (the hunter), and Auceps (the fowler). He combines his precepts for the sport, in enthusiasm for which he is a true Englishman, with a real appreciation of Nature and the quiet beauty of our riverside scenery.

We have spoken of the revival of the drama (p. 125) after the Restoration, and of its change of tone. The French

drama became the model for tragedy, and a style adopted which was quite alien to the national dramatic genius and taste, and tended to deteriorate into bombastic rant. Dryden's

heroic plays, with their impossible heroes and exaggerated situations, are favourable specimens of the tragedy of the Restoration; in the hands of the many minor poets of his age the drama became hopelessly unnatural and artificial.

Dryden's most distinguished contemporary in tragedy was *Thomas Otway* (1652-1685). He began life as an actor, but was not successful, and turned his attention to writing for the stage. In some respects Otway belonged rather to the later Elizabethan dramatists than to those of the Restoration. For instance, he did not hesitate to introduce comic scenes to relieve the tension of his tragedies, and he has more real pathos than most of his contemporaries. *Venice Preserved* and *The Orphan* are his finest plays.

Nathaniel Lee produced many heroic plays, and did some dramatic work with Dryden. His best work, *The Rival Queens* (1677), is a typical heroic play.

Thomas Southerne contributed a good deal to tragic drama during his long life of eighty-six years. His best plays are *The Fatal Marriage* (1694) and *Oroonoko* (1696).

The comedy of the Restoration aimed at giving an accurate picture of manners. If tragedy tended to become unreal,

comedy was painfully realistic. The want of moral tone was only a reflection of what was to be found everywhere in the society of the day. It thus gives an interesting picture of contemporary life, but has had no lasting influence on the national drama. The coarseness and want

Comedy of
the Restor-
ation
Epoch.

of morality are ingrained in the plays themselves, and none of them would be suffered on the modern stage.

Sir George Etheredge, a man of fashion and a courtier, gives us a picture of the fashionable fop in his *Man of Mode*, or *Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676).

William Wycherley excelled in *The Plain Dealer* and *The Country Wife*, acted between 1672 and 1674. He was an ingenious adapter of plays, chiefly from the original of Molière. In his old age he employed Pope, then a lad of sixteen, to help him as a reviser, but the connection soon ended in a bitter quarrel.

Sir John Vanbrugh, the fashionable architect of the day, whose ponderous style was commemorated in the epitaph written for him by a wit,

"Lie heavy on him, earth, for he
Laid many a heavy load on thee,"

was also a writer and adapter of comedies. The best of the original ones are *The Relapse* and *The Provoked Wife* (1697). The types of character which he draws are amusing and life-like.

William Congreve (1670-1729) was undoubtedly the cleverest comedian of the age. He was eminently successful on the stage and in society, and much admired by his contemporaries. Voltaire considered him the first of English dramatists. He particularly excels in clever, lively dialogue.

His chief comedies are *The Double Dealer*, *Love for Love*, and *The Way of the World*. *The Mourning Bride* (1697) was Congreve's one tragedy. It was of the rhetorical form of tragedy so popular at the time, but it has some fine passages, noted for the melody of verse and the vigour of expression.

A vigorous and brave attack was made on the open indecency of the stage, both in tone and language, by *Jeremy*

Collier's
Attack on
the Stage.

Collier, a High Church clergyman and an able critic. His work was called "A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage," and it had a great influence on public

taste. The cynical spirit in which questions of moral right

and wrong had been treated for so long was, at any rate, reproved ; and, though no violent reform followed, better feeling prevailed in time, and produced a healthier atmosphere for the drama. The plays of the eighteenth century, though not free from coarseness, were higher in tone, and free from the sneering spirit as regards virtue and religion.

PERIOD VII

POPE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

Classical period—Its characteristics—Pope and his contemporaries—Swift
—Prose of the Augustan Age—Addison and his contemporaries—
Fiction—Chief novelists of period.

THE whole of English literary effort during the period, roughly speaking, from the Restoration of 1660 to the French Revolution of 1789, and which reached its climax in the reign of Queen Anne, our so-called Augustan Age, has one aim and is governed by one principle—the desire for perfection of form and the sense of beauty of literary composition as such. The school of writers is known as the “classical” school, not because they consciously imitated classical models, but because they had found out that there were certain rules which governed good writing, and to these they closely adhered. A poem was not valuable in their eyes for its imagination or its picturesqueness unless it was also a composition in symmetry and harmony.

This school is also known as the “critical,” the “conventional,” or the “town,” school of poetry—titles which point pretty clearly to the subjects chosen by the poet, and the tone of his writings. The chief characteristics of the style were clearness, conciseness, smoothness and harmony, force and vigour, rather than originality, in treatment.

This last characteristic is well expressed by Pope, the great master of the school, in lines which at the same time illustrate

well the clear, concise, smooth nature of the verse of this period :

“True wit is nature to advantage dressed :
What oft was said, but ne’er so well expressed.”

Naturally, this style would, in its best representatives, abound in the epigram, a witty comparison or contrast worked out in a few words, and which has been defined as

“a dwarfish whole :
The body brevity, and wit the soul.”

The epigram shows the same tendency for ingenious illustration which ran riot with the metaphysical poets and their “conceits,” only the “conceit” generally involved the matter, while the epigram was, at least, clear, and easily remembered.

In Pope were summed up all the characteristics of the poetry of this period, and no poet so excelled in bringing style to perfection. *Alexander Pope* was born in

Pope,
1688-1744. 1688. His father was a London merchant and a Roman Catholic, who retired the same year

from business and settled at Binfield, about nine miles from Windsor. When he was twelve years old Dryden died, and the boy, destined to be his successor in his literary kingdom, is said to have entered the deceased poet’s name in a list of departed friends in his diary : “May 1st, 1700, obit semper venerandus poetarum princeps, Johannes Dryden.” There was indeed a true *kinship* between the two, and the older poet exercised a strong influence over the spirit of the precocious boy, who tells us of himself :

“As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.”

Shut out by his creed from a public school or the University, Pope’s career was a very desultory one. Some tutoring from a priest and a short time at two private schools seem to be all the regular education he had ; but he read incessantly, taught himself languages—that he might read more, wrote verses which his father criticised and corrected, and thus

equipped himself for the attainment of his life's ambition—a high place in the literary world. No one can help admiring in Pope the triumph of genius coupled with persevering zeal over the many difficulties and disadvantages of his lot.

Isolated by his creed, shut out from professional, political and social life by that and by his humble position, hampered by all the drawbacks of incessant ill-health, Pope never swerved from the object he had placed before him, never allowing himself to be distracted from its pursuit.

Pope was infinitely painstaking in his work. Day and night he laboured to bring it to perfection, so that he became, if not in the highest sense of the word a great poet, certainly a great literary artist. Early in his career a critic gave him a piece of advice for which he was always grateful: "Many English poets have been great—few correct; study correctness above all."

In one respect only Pope stood apart from the spirit of his age; he cared nothing for politics, and never willingly wrote on the subject. He drew his friends from both political parties, though circumstances tended to give him more Whig than Tory patrons. Through Swift, the leader of the Tory literary party, Pope was introduced to Lord Bolingbroke, a brilliant man of versatile powers, and himself a writer. Pope calls him his "guide, philosopher, and friend." He was one of the few friends with whom Pope did not quarrel.

The head-quarters of the Whig writers was Button's Coffee-House, while the Tories founded the Martinus Scriblerus Club. Pope, as neutral, frequented both.

In 1718, after the death of his father, Pope took a villa at Twickenham, and gave up his London life, which, in spite of its literary and social interests, suited him ill on account of his feeble health. Here he took up warmly the prevailing fashion of landscape gardening, taking great delight in laying out his little garden in mazes, grottos, and alleys ending in classical temples, and in planting it with shrubs tortured into curious shapes. Here Pope spent probably some of the happiest hours granted to his morbid, self-torturing nature. He was

warmly attached to his mother, who lived on to extreme old age, tenderly cared for by her son.

Pope's feeble health broke up before he was fifty-eight. Characteristically, he worked up to the end, and was brave and cheerful in sight of death. He was buried in Twickenham Churchyard with his parents.

Pope, like Spenser, had begun his poetic work with *Pastorals*. These *Pastorals* took the form of four poems to the seasons,

The
Pastorals,
1709.

contributed to a miscellany arranged and published by Tonson in 1709. The pastoral, which had always a tendency to become unnatural and forced, was a very artificial production in an age such as Pope's, which avowedly despised country life and its interests. Pope was not quite such a transgressor as some of his contemporaries, who made roses bloom and nightingales sing in December when it suited their purpose, but, still, his poem is both artificial and tame; his shepherds are self-conscious prigs, and their lady-loves simpering nymphs. The great excellence of the poem is in its sweet versification.

Having once embarked in the literary world, Pope rose rapidly to fame. Two years after the *Pastorals* he published his *Essay on Criticism*, a didactic poem "Essay on Criticism." on style and taste, which created a great stir in the literary world. Pope's warm admiration of the classical poets led him to write this poem, but he had nothing very original to say on the subject of their poetry. Still, though the thoughts were well known, they had seldom been so clearly, tersely, and vigorously expressed. The idea of the poem was suggested by two works, the "*Ars Poetica*" of Horace, and "*L'Art Poétique*" of Boileau. It is divided into three parts. Part I. treats of the value of true criticism; shows that true taste is as rare as true genius, and more liable to corruption by false education; that nature is the best guide to judgment, but nature is to be improved by rules of art, which "are nature still, but nature methodized," and concludes with a eulogy on the ancients,

to whom, as the real source of these rules, all reverence and gratitude are due.

In Part II. Pope examines the causes which hinder true judgment, such as pride, ignorance, prejudice, party spirit, and envy. He specially commends kindness of judgment—

“ Good nature and good sense must ever join :
To err is human ; to forgive, divine ”

—and concludes by showing when severity may be wisely used.

Part III. gives us rules for the conduct of a critic. He is to be guided by candour, modesty, sincerity, and good-breeding. The character of the impertinent critic and the good critic are drawn in succession, and the poem ends with a survey of the history of criticism and some praise of men to whom criticism owes much, such as Erasmus, Boileau, Roscommon, and his own personal friend and critic who had lately died, Walsh.

An allusion in Part III. made for Pope a bitter enemy in a fellow-poet, Dennis, noted for his unsparing criticisms, and he retaliated by a savage pamphlet attacking Pope.

The heroic couplet, brought to such perfection in its smoothness and sweetness, is sometimes varied in his early poems by an occasional Alexandrine—

“ That like a wounded snake drags its slow length along,”

and more often by a triplet—

“ Music resembles poetry ; in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master-hand alone can reach.”

The cæsura, or pause, occurs in Pope more often than not after the second poetical foot ; the “enjambement,” or carrying on of the sense from one line to the other, is quite discarded by him, so that, in spite of the wonderful skill with which he formed his verses, the chief fault of heroic verse, monotony, becomes quite oppressive. L

The "Essay on Criticism" abounds in those epigrammatic lines which it has been said "engrave ideas":

"A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not, the Pierian spring."

"Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found."

"Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot."

In 1712 Pope contributed to a number of the "Spectator" his poem, *The Messiah*, a paraphrase of several of Isaiah's

"The
Messiah,"
1712.

most famous Messianic prophecies, especially the one in chapter xi., which spoke of the peace which would follow the reign of the Messiah. It is in imitation of one of Virgil's eclogues which also dwelt on a Sibylline prophecy of the birth of a wonderful boy. Pope's poem is a specimen of false taste; the simplicity and dignity of Isaiah is quite lost in this elaborate paraphrase.

Artificial and unreal as Pope is when he deals with Nature, we find him in his element when he describes the manners of the age in which he lived. His next poem of

"Rape of
the Lock,"
1714.

any importance, *The Rape of the Lock*, is by many critics considered his masterpiece, and certainly is just the sort of subject he knew best how to handle. The incident which gave rise to this poem was a quarrel between two families well known in London society.

Lord Petre had so admired a certain Miss Arabella Fermor that he had ventured to cut off a lock of her hair without permission. The result was a quarrel, and it was suggested to Pope that a poem, treating the incident as a playful joke, might restore peace between the two families, and apparently the effort was successful.

Lowell says that this poem alone would have immortalized Pope. The very artificiality, so unpleasing in the Pastorals

and the "Messiah," is suitable to the whole spirit of the poem, and Pope stands forth pre-eminent as the poet of society—in short, the poet of man, as he has been modified and influenced by dealing with man.

The poem is written in the mock-heroic style, and forms a clever parody on an heroic poem. It is divided into five cantos. Canto I. describes the appointment of the sylph to guard the fair lady in the impending danger, and speaks of the various kinds of sprites who watch over the "Fair,"

"The light militia of the lower sky."

The heroine is approached with warning in her dream, but, wakened by her lap-dog, turns to the great business of the day—the toilet—and the sylphs watch over the efforts of her maid and direct them aright.

In Canto II. Belinda, in all her beauty, sets forth to take part in an excursion by water to Hampton Court. Ariel, chief of the sylphs, foresees harm, appoints some of his fairy army to guard every possession of the lady, and threatens terrible penalties of any neglect.

Canto III. gives us the meeting of the fair assembly at Hampton Court, the game of ombre, the foul connivance of the rival fair one, Clarissa, who gives the Baron the scissors with which he severs the lock whilst Belinda is bending her head over the fragrant cup of coffee.

In Canto IV. we have the rage and despair of the injured damsel :

"For ever cursed be this detested day,
Which snatched my best, my fav'rite curl away.

* * * * *

Oh, hadst thou, cruel ! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these !"

In Canto V. war is declared on the Baron by Belinda and her followers for the restoration of the lock. The sylphs assist the lady, and the gnomes (or earth sprites) her daring lover. An heroic combat in true Homeric style follows. The Baron is worsted, but, alas ! the lock cannot be restored ;

it has mounted to the heavens, and become a bright constellation :

“ But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,
Though mark'd by none but quick poetic eyes ;
A sudden star it shot through liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.”

In *Windsor Forest*, written in 1713, we have an example of what Dr. Johnson calls “local” poetry—poetry devoted to the celebration of some particular place. Denham’s “Cooper’s Hill” is an example of this kind of poetry. The descriptions of scenery show Pope’s usual happy ease of language ; but classical allusions are too frequent, and the poet gladly turns from the contemplation of Nature to political and historical reflections, and ends with a eulogy on the Peace of Utrecht, just concluded.

Two short poems, both written in 1715, close the first period of Pope’s literary career, and are remarkable as being the only ones which speak of *youth*, and have anything of the sentiment or the fervour of imagination of a youthful mind.

The first is the *Elegy to an Unfortunate Lady*. The subject of it was, perhaps, a Mrs. Cope, to whom Pope had given some generous help, but the details of the case in the poem are fictitious. The lady has been cruelly treated, and has committed suicide in a foreign land. The style is as perfect as in his more artificial works, but there is more warmth of feeling, more real pathos, than in any other poem.

In the *Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard* the pathos is much less genuine, and the sentiment often becomes forced. These two poems, which represent the sentimental and imaginative side of Pope better than any other, do not bear comparison, however, with the early imaginative poems of men like Burns or Wordsworth, who spoke straight from the heart.

The second period of Pope’s literary life almost corresponds with the reign of George II., and is associated chiefly with his *translation of Homer*. It came out during the years 1715 to 1720, and was published by the generous subscription

of Swift, Bolingbroke, and other friends. It was a bold task, only achieved by sheer hard work and perseverance, for

Pope's classical education had been of the
 Period II.: slightest, and he had studied the original
 Translation of by means of translations chiefly. However,
 Homer. Pope's age was not famous for classical learning,
 and the translation received high praise.

The few scholars of the age gauged its merits correctly. "A very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but not Homer," was the criticism of Bentley, one of the first classics of his time, who was not to be misled into admiration of it by the smooth versification and musical flow of Pope's version.

The artificiality of the age was essentially opposed to the simplicity and directness of that of Homer, and Pope never entered into the spirit of the original. The old gods and heroes were not living personages to him, but stiff mechanical figures, not unlike some of the representations in art of the same period to be seen on the walls of the National Gallery.

It was in connection with his translation of Homer that Pope quarrelled with one of the earliest of his admirers and staunchest of his friends, Addison, and all evidence goes to show that the chief blame was not Addison's.

A translation of the "Odyssey" followed between the years 1723 and 1725, but this attempt was not so successful.

The third literary period of Pope's life opened with his famous satire, *The Dunciad*. It was written in retaliation for the many annoying attacks to which he had
 Period III.: been subject from the carping critics of the day.
 "The Dunciad," 1727. The age was a most unscrupulous and abusive one, and Pope was thin-skinned and sensitive to a fault. At length, after writhing under their insults, Pope declared open war on the "Dunces" in his mock-heroic, "The Dunciad." It was written in three cantos. In Canto I. the hero is chosen as Chieftain of the Dunces, and crowned by the Goddess of Dulness. In Canto II. the newly-crowned

monarch presides over the public games which celebrate the great occasion, and various poets are satirized among the Dunces who surround his throne. Canto III.: The hero descends to the Elysian shades, reviews the spirits of the Dunces, and sees a glorious vision of his own reign. A fourth canto was published in 1742. It celebrated the triumph of Dulness, and added some fresh satirical sketches to the picture. This second version of the poem was known as the "New Dunciad."

There were very few of the inferior poets of the age who escaped the sharp sting of Pope's satire. Theobald, a heavy pedantic writer, appears as the King of Dunces, but in the second version Colley Cibber, an actor-dramatist, a lively and witty man, was most inappropriately substituted for Theobald, as meanwhile Pope had suffered from Cibber's attacks on his one dramatic effort, "Three Hours after Marriage."

One great name, Bentley, the greatest classic of the age, appears among the number of petty scribblers. Pope, who was a fine judge of literary merit, had spoken and written most appreciatively of Bentley's work, until the unfortunate moment when the great critic spoke contemptuously of Pope's translation of Homer. When the Universities are made to appear before Dulness, Bentley figures as

"Thy mighty scholiast, whose unwearied pains
Made Horace dull and humbled Milton's strains."

The criticism was untrue and unjust, and shows how much Pope had lowered himself to the level of the crew of worthless pamphleteers and malicious rhymsters.

In 1725 Bolingbroke had returned from exile and settled close to Pope at Twickenham. The old friendship was

renewed, and Pope determined to write a long "Essay on Man," 1732, philosophical poem, under the direction of his "guide, philosopher, and friend." The first plan included a poem in four books, treating of man in every aspect; but the first book, dealing with man in the abstract,

and of his relation to the universe, is all that was completed. The aim of the poem, he tells us himself, is to "vindicate the ways of God to man," a more difficult task in the age of open scepticism in which Pope lived than it had been when Milton had undertaken to "justify the ways of God to man."

Those who (in Pope's age) concerned themselves about the great truths of religion were accustomed to put everything into the form of a philosophical problem. They did not start, as Milton did, from a basis of certain accepted truths. Pope was not a strong or clear reasoner nor a deep thinker, but, by the force of his wonderful power of clear expression, thoughts quite trite and commonplace in themselves have been remembered and looked upon as revelations.

Lowell says: "Pope was not a great thinker; but wherever he found a thought, no matter what, he could express it so clearly, so tersely, and with such smoothness of versification, as to give it an everlasting currency."

The "Essay on Man" is divided into four epistles. Epistle I. deals with man in respect to the universe. The opening lines address Bolingbroke, to whom the poem is dedicated, and speak of its chief aim. Man is shown to be only part of a great universe, and can only judge with regard to that with which he is connected. He is presumptuous when he attempts to usurp the place of God and judge as if he knew the whole system. A universal order runs through creation; man's true happiness is in submission to Providence in the present and for the future.

Epistle II. treats of the nature of man with respect to himself:

"The proper study of mankind is man."

Man must, then, learn to know himself, his powers, and his frailties. He will find two strong principles at work, self-love and reason; he will learn to recognise and control his passions, to distinguish between virtue and vice, and to see how even frailties and passions may answer the ends of Providence and be beneficial to society.

In Epistle III. man's relation to society is examined :

"One all-extending, all-preserving soul
Connects each being, greatest with the least ;
Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast ;
All served, all serving : nothing stands alone ;
The chain holds on, and where it ends unknown."

Reason and instinct are contrasted, and their work in the formation of society is shown. The origin of true religion and good government is from the instinct of love, as superstition and tyranny spring from fear.

Epistle IV. deals with man in relation to happiness. The poet examines false notions of happiness, and shows how impossible it is to define or locate it exactly :

"Fixed to no spot is happiness sincere ;
'Tis nowhere to be found, or everywhere."

Happiness is attainable by all, but does not rest in external gifts ; in its highest and best sense it is inseparable from virtue :

"Virtue only makes our bliss below."

The poem ends with a warm eulogy of Bolingbroke, in which Pope acknowledges gracefully that the whole inspiration of the work had been his.

Some passages in the "Essay on Man" laid Pope open to a charge of belief in fatalism ; the last poem he published, *The Universal Prayer*, in 1738, was written to show his firm belief in free-will as the gift of God :

"Who, binding Nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will."

The *Moral Essays* were at first intended to form part of the "Essay on Man." They were published between the years 1731 and 1735. They took the form of "Moral Essays." four epistles on *Riches, Taste, Characters of Men and of Women*. In workmanship they are very fine, being masterpieces of clear expression, good style, and smooth versification.

In the "Epistle on Riches," addressed to Lord Bathurst,

occurs the famous eulogy of the generous "Man of Ross" and the contrasting picture of the miser.

In his "Characters" he draws types of the cunning, affected, and witty. His estimate of woman is cynical:

"Most women have no character at all,"

"Woman's at best a contradiction still."

His picture of an estimable woman is not an ideal one, and one of the best things he can find to say of her is that she is "mistress of herself, though China fall!" Yet these "Characters of Women" were addressed to Martha Blount, a good woman and a warm friend, probably the only woman Pope ever loved.

A series of satires appeared in 1735, to which the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* formed a prologue. In this prologue appeared the famous satire on Addison, written many years before, but now published after his victim's death.

Many lesser poets of some merit gathered around Pope. *Sir Richard Blackmore*, an early contemporary, is remembered

for his epic poem, *Prince Arthur*, in twelve books, an ambitious attempt in which the author tried to rival Milton. It was published in 1697, and was a heavy commonplace work.

Samuel Garth, a fashionable physician, made his literary fame by a mock-heroic poem, *The Dispensary*, 1699, in which he parodies the dispute going on between the College of Physicians and the Apothecaries as to the free distribution of medicine to the poor. He was a good versifier, and used the "heroic couplet" well. He became physician to George I., by whom he was knighted.

Matthew Prior produced (1688) a clever satire on Dryden's "Hind and Panther," entitled *The Town and Country Mouse*.

One of the most popular among the literary wits of the time was *John Gay* (1688-1732). In 1714 he produced *The Shepherd's Week*, written at Pope's instigation to ridicule the pastoral form of poetry. It abounds in folk-lore, and is far more interesting and real than the poems it is supposed to parody.

Gay's
Works.

Trivia, or "The Art of Walking the Streets of London," 1716, is an amusing mock-heroic, partly suggested by Swift. In his *Fables* Gay puts into clear, smooth verse some of the best-known fables, and applies the morals. But Gay's most original work was *The Beggar's Opera*, a splendid example of an English ballad opera. He boldly takes as his heroes and heroines characters from Newgate. It is an amusing satire on a fashionable conventional play, is full of political allusions, witty dialogues, and lively ballads. Some of Gay's songs—"Black-eyed Susan," "'Twas when the seas were roaring," and "Sweet William's Farewell"—have deservedly won much more than mere contemporary popularity.

Dr. Arbuthnot (1675-1735), Physician-Extraordinary to Queen Anne, was a witty satirist and one of the founders of a literary club to which Pope, Gay, Swift, and many other wits, belonged—the "Martinus Scriblerus Club." In 1713 he wrote a clever political satire, *Law is a Bottomless Well; or, The History of John Bull*. It represents a lawsuit as taking place between John Bull the clothier and Mr. Frog the linen-draper (Holland), *versus* Lord Strutt (Spain) and Louis Baboon (France). Marlborough figures as Humphrey Hocus. This satire has given us the name for a typical Englishman.

Thomas Parnell (1679-1718), whose poems were first published in a collected form by Pope after the author's death, was a poet of some considerable merit. *The Hermit* is a good specimen of conventional heroic verse; but more originality of style and more warmth of natural feeling is shown in two of his shorter poems, the *Hymn to Contentment* and the night-piece on *Death*. The latter shows a genuine love of Nature, such as seldom appears in the writings of the conventional school.

"How deep yon azure dyes the sky,
Where orbs of gold unnumbered lie,
While through their ranks in silver pride
The nether crescent seems to glide."

Such lines as these remind us of Milton's "Il Penseroso," and seem to be precursors of a better and healthier way of

treating Nature in poetry than had prevailed for the last half-century or so in England.

The greatest of Pope's contemporaries and the most original genius of the Augustan Age was *Jonathan Swift*, the prince of English satirists. He was born in Ireland in 1667, but neither of his parents were Irish.

Swift,
1667-1745.

His father died before his birth, and an uncle took charge of his education, sent him to school at Kilkenny, and finally to Trinity College, Dublin. He obtained in 1689 a secretaryship in the family of Sir William Temple. He took a great liking for Esther Johnson, the little daughter of the housekeeper at Moor Park, the "Stella" who appears in his poems, journals, and letters. He taught her carefully, and the friendship was a lifelong one.

In 1694 he took Orders in the Established Church of Ireland, but, finding it difficult to support himself on the income of a very small Irish living, he returned to Moor Park. On Temple's death Swift prepared for publication the numerous works which his patron had left behind. In 1700 he obtained the living of Laracor in Ireland, which he held for ten years, dividing his time between it and London, where he soon became much sought after in literary circles. At first he was closely associated with the Whig party, and was the companion and champion of such statesmen as Halifax, Godolphin, and Somers; but the union was only a superficial one. Swift's Church views were strongly in accordance with those held by the Tories, and very soon a coolness sprang up between him and the Whigs, and he openly joined the opposite party in 1710. Swift's great ambition was an English bishopric; but he had made too many enemies for this to be realized, and the highest preferment that he received was the deanery of St. Patrick, Dublin. Here Swift espoused popular causes, and worked vigorously for many much-needed reforms in Ireland. His efforts were rewarded by gaining the warm-hearted devotion of the Irish, of whose rights he was the champion.

Swift's last years were terribly sad. He suffered from

disease and insanity, and from 1728, when he lost his faithful friend, Esther Johnson, he seems to have given himself up to despair and melancholy. He lingered on in this sad condition until 1745, and was buried in his own cathedral by the side of the faithful Stella.

Swift did not produce much poetry ; his chief distinction is as a great prose-writer and satirist. His genius is original

and versatile ; he tried all kinds of subjects
 Works of and styles, and he excelled in all. In humour
 Swift. and satire he is unrivalled, but the nature of

his satire is too often cruelly bitter and severe ; the morbid fits from which he suffered more or less throughout life had their marked effect upon his intellect, and while under their influence he used his powers of satire unmercifully on whatever and whoever came under his notice. His two best-known poems are *Cadenus and Vanessa* (1733), dedicated to his friendship for Hester Vanhomrigh, who had once been his pupil, and *On the Death of Dr. Swift*, verses describing how the news of his death would be received by his friends and acquaintances.

His earliest prose work of importance was a volume containing *The Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books*. The first was a witty satire on ecclesiastical divisions, under the form of the adventures of three brothers : Peter (the Roman Catholic Church), Jack (the Presbyterian), and Martin (the Anglican). "The Battle of the Books" describes an engagement between the Ancients and the Moderns, somewhat after the style of an Homeric combat. It was founded on a widespread discussion going on in literary circles throughout the Continent on the comparative merits of ancient and modern literature. Temple had written a pamphlet in which he upheld the superiority of classic literature, and Swift took the same side as his patron. He does not attempt argument, or any fair view of his opponents' position, but brings the whole force of his satire to bear in a most unscrupulous manner for the purpose of covering his enemies with shame and contempt. Between the years 1721 and 1724 Swift wrote many pamphlets in favour of Irish rights and reforms. The most famous of these was a series

of seven letters inserted in a Dublin newspaper, signed "M. B. Drapier," and purporting to be the work of an Irish shopkeeper. These *Drapier's Letters*, as they are called, were written in 1724, and had for their object the defeat of a scheme for the circulation of copper money in Ireland, the contract for coining which had been granted to Wood, a Birmingham speculator. Owing to Swift's clever opposition the scheme had to be withdrawn, and the Irish, who imagined themselves saved from a great calamity, were deeply grateful to the author of the letters.

It was during years of loneliness and disappointment in his Irish life that Swift produced his great masterpiece, *Gulliver's Travels*. This wonderfully original "Gulliver's Travels," 1726. work is at the same time a political and social satire and a charming romance. A great part of it forms a most delightful book for children, while in parts, again, it is the most bitter and pitiless satire on mankind.

The story is of the adventures of a ship-surgeon, Gulliver, who goes on four successive voyages, each of which forms the subject of one book. The first is to Lilliput, where the inhabitants are about six inches high, and all the objects, natural and artificial, are in proportion; the second is to Brobdingnag, where he finds a nation of giants, and he is given as a plaything to Glumdalclitch, a little maid of twelve years old, who is, however, forty feet high, as a plaything. On the third voyage Gulliver visits many countries, the flying island of Laputa, the learned academy of Lagado, and so on. The follies and mistakes of learned men and philosophers are satirized in this part. In the last part Gulliver reaches the region of the Houyhnhnms, where horses form the reasonable civilized population, and the human race, the Yahoos, are degraded and loathsome creatures. Swift seems to have poured out all his pent-up fury and bitterness in this last attack on mankind.

The term *Augustan Age* is, generally speaking, applied to

the literature of the reign of Queen Anne; it is, however, often considered to include the work of Dryden, who died before she came to the throne, and also, to embrace the work of Pope, who survived her for quite thirty years. It was essentially an age of prose-writing, and, as it is most distinctly the province of prose to be the record of contemporary opinion and feeling, we must notice what were some of the special characteristics of the period which were so faithfully reflected in its literature.

With the settlement brought by the Revolution of 1688, men's minds turned from the struggle for freedom, now in a great measure secured to all classes, to a conflict of parties and of opinions. Political party strife became of absorbing interest, and writers were pressed into the service on either side.

Prose of the Augustan Age.

Literature naturally tended to deteriorate when so employed. Able authors lowered themselves to use their gifts in fierce, passionate denunciations of one political party, or in untrue flattery of the other; and inferior authors were most unscrupulous in the base attacks they made on their political opponents. An advantage, however, springing from this association of literature and politics was the improved position of the author. Up to the time of the Restoration books were commonly published through some patron; the reading public was very limited, and no author could support himself by his work alone.

But the author of Queen Anne's reign, though still partly dependent on powerful patronage, was gradually gaining the support of an ever-increasing number of readers, and was working his way toward independence. Coffee-houses became the centre of much intellectual activity; they were frequented by the leading men in the social, political, and literary world, and the life which centred there is directly connected with the rise of a new mode of publication—the periodical.

On the subject of religion the tone was too often sceptical and indifferent; seriousness and earnestness were at once styled "Puritanism," and condemned as narrow and unin-

tellectual. The coarseness brought in by the Court of Charles II., though not encouraged under the sober rule of William III. and Anne, was still applauded in fashionable society. Town-life and its interests were paramount, while that of the country was considered of no importance.

The *periodical essay*, the most distinctive work of the Augustan Age proper, is inseparably connected with the names of Addison and Steele.

Joseph Addison, born 1672, was son of the Dean of Lichfield. He was educated at Charterhouse and Oxford, and

spent some years in travel in France and Italy,

Addison, through the interest of Lord Somers, who

1672-1719.

obtained a pension for him. On the death

of King William he lost this pension and returned home.

In 1704 he was employed by the Ministry of the day to

celebrate Marlborough's successes. The result was a poem,

entitled *The Campaign*, which became most popular. As a

reward he was given various offices in succession under

Government, reaching at length the position of Secretary of

State in 1717. He married the Dowager Countess of Warwick,

but the marriage does not seem to have been a happy one.

He retired from office in 1718 on a pension of £1,500, and

died in the following year.

Addison's first long poem, "The Campaign," was very popular among his contemporaries, but has not lived. It is

a commonplace narrative in smooth but life-

Addison's less verse of the circumstances of the Battle

Poetry.

of Blenheim, and has been described as a

"gazette in rhyme." He is a good example, with his arti-

ficiality and correctness of style, of an average poet of the

school of Pope. His best work is to be found among his sacred

poems; "The spacious firmament on high" (generally at-

tributed to him), "The Lord my pasture shall prepare," and

"When all Thy mercies, O my God," have some literary

merit, and breathe a spirit of sincere devotion which has given

them deservedly a lasting place among English hymns.

Addison produced two dramas. *Rosamund*, in 1706, was

an attempt to show how a real English opera might be constructed. As a play it was a failure.

Addison shows us in some of his essays that he realized the defects in the Italian opera as performed at that time in England, but the task of writing a model English opera was beyond his power. His second dramatic attempt was *Cato*, in 1713. Addison was a great admirer of the classical drama, and "Cato" is rigidly classical. In style and sentiment it is most correct, but it is devoid of passion and of any real characterization. "Cato" is a virtuous but lifeless character, surrounded by a number of admirable nonentities, hardly distinguishable one from the other. In spite of its lifelessness, it was a most popular play, and had an unprecedented run of thirty-five nights. This success was entirely owing to the party-spirit of the time; not that in this case it was put into the play by the author, but rather that it was *read* into it by the audience. Both Whigs and Tories professed to see in "Cato" the lover of liberty, and yet the firm opponent of political change, a confirmation of their own opinions.

It is Addison's prose writings that give him the right to a high place in the literature of the eighteenth century.

The Spectator, his great work, grew out of an earlier venture in the way of periodical essay-writing, *The Tatler*, which had been begun by Richard Steele in April, 1709, and lasted until January, 1711, and to which Addison had contributed no less than sixty-nine papers. Any periodical literature in the form of the newspaper or magazine of modern times had hitherto been only occasionally produced.

After the expiration of the Licensing Act in 1695 had secured the liberty of the press, the first daily paper, "The Post-boy," appeared; it was short-lived, but its successor, "The Daily Courant," lived on. "The Review," edited by Defoe in 1704, was an important addition to periodical literature; and in Queen Anne's reign both political parties had their own special organs. There had long been felt a need for some periodical (not connected with a political party) which should form and educate

Earlier Periodicals.

public opinion and public taste. Everything was prepared for such a production, the press was free, and in the various clubs and coffee-houses there was a receptive public ready to read, eager to discuss, all the questions of the day.

The Tatler, the immediate forerunner of "The Spectator," appeared three times a week, divided into sections which corresponded to the various leading coffee-houses—Will's for literary topics, White's for fashionable news, and so on. It was written in the character of "Isaac Bickerstaff," a personality borrowed from one of Swift's satires, and it contained current news and advertisements. It was discontinued partly for political reasons in January, 1711, and on March 1 of the same year appeared the first number of "The Spectator," and continued as a daily penny paper until December 6, 1712. There was an unsuccessful attempt to revive it in 1714. It showed a great advance on "The Tatler" both in aim and "Spectator," execution. It proposed to give healthy food for thought and conversation. Addison aimed, 1711-1712.

as he tells us himself, at bringing "philosophy out of schools, colleges, and libraries, to dwell at clubs, assemblies, in coffee-houses, and at tea-tables," and there is no doubt that a healthier tone was introduced into society through his paper. He did his work wisely and well, carrying on no blind, unreasoning crusade against society and all its amusements and customs, but at the same time not pandering for a moment to its vices; and he teaches his moral lesson simply and naturally, and not in the dictatorial spirit which too often characterizes such instruction.

Addison's own contributions to "The Spectator" outweigh the others in quantity and quality, and give the tone to the whole. There is a great variety in choice of subject; no subject is too trivial, if it is one in which men and women would do well to take a healthy interest. There was no order observed in the arrangement of the essays. The Saturday paper was always devoted to a subject of more serious thought, that would be suitable for Sunday reading, as, for example, the series of essays on Milton's "Paradise

Lost." The essays may be arranged in certain groups by subject. A large group concerns the "Spectator Club" and its members, and this includes the famous series on Sir Roger de Coverley, which above all have made Addison's name immortal. Then there is the group of critical essays on humour and wit, on the opera, on separate works, such as "Paradise Lost," "Chevy Chase." Only a few essays are political—for example, "Public Credit," "The British Constitution." Moral and religious essays form another group, such as "Friendship," "Spare Time," "Trust in God." A large number concern fashions, manners, whims of the day, some of the most famous being Fans, Patches, Head-dresses, London Cries, Practical Jokes, and Coffee-houses. A few are in the form of allegories and tales, such as the "Vision of Mirza," "Theodosius and Constantia."

Addison has a keen sense of humour, perhaps his greatest gift among the many which fitted him as an observer and painter of human nature. His satire was always kindly and human, and he is singularly free from prejudice and narrow-mindedness. Party-spirit and its excesses is continually held up to ridicule, and, though he was always associated with the Whigs in office, the noblest character that he draws is the old *Tory* knight, Sir Roger. Addison was a master of style in prose-writing. He combined ease and elegance with simplicity and clearness.

Other contributors to "The Spectator" were Steele, Budgell, Hughes, Pope, and Swift, but a good many of the essays are unsigned and unidentified.

Richard Steele (1672-1729) was closely connected with Addison in life and work. Their friendship was formed in schooldays at Charterhouse. Steele went on

Steele, 1672-1729. to Oxford, but left the University without taking his degree, and entered the army as a "gentleman volunteer." In 1701 he wrote a pamphlet, entitled "The Christian Hero," to show that "no principles but those of religion are sufficient to make a great man." That this was Steele's sincere belief there can be no doubt;

but his character was not a strong one, and his practice was often at variance with his teaching. Still, it is to his honour that from his first work to his last his voice was always raised in condemnation of hypocrisy and self-indulgence, and in favour of truth and virtue. His work was unpopular in military circles, where the general tone was lax in morals and indifferent to religion. He next wrote for the drama "The Funeral, or Grief à la Mode," and "The Tender Husband," both written with a distinct moral purpose.

In 1707 he was appointed Gazetteer, gave up his army commission, married, and settled down in London. He renewed his friendship with Addison and formed one with Swift. In 1709 he began *The Tatler*, and two years later helped Addison to begin "The Spectator." Steele in 1712 brought out *The Guardian* alone. In 1714 he entered Parliament, but was ejected the same year for writing *The Crisis*, which criticised the Hanoverian Succession. On the accession of George I. his fortunes improved, and he was made Supervisor of Drury Lane Theatre, and knighted. The years 1718 and 1719 were occupied with a "paper" war with Addison, in which, unfortunately, their long friendship was severed.

Addison's sudden death in June, 1719, made reconciliation impossible, to Steele's great regret. In the last years of his life political pamphlets brought upon him the vengeance of the Government, and he lost his office. In 1723 Steele left London with broken health, and leaving his affairs in utter confusion. His reckless, impulsive Irish nature had made it difficult for him to keep out of debt, and short times of prosperity, in which he spent lavishly on others as well as on himself, were always followed by times of abject poverty. He died in 1729 from paralysis.

Steele's mind was of a quicker and more inventive turn than that of Addison. It is said that he Comparison
with
Addison. originated the characters of Sir Roger, Will Honeycomb, and Sir Andrew Freeport; but it was Addison who elaborated the idea, who worked out the full-length portrait with judgment, patience,

and taste. Steele excels in the telling of a story, especially a pathetic story of human love or sorrow. Steele was too careless to become a master of his art, as Addison was; he probably wrote as he spoke, straight from his heart, and in passages of generous emotion he is at his best. His essay "Memories of Childhood" could hardly, in its pathos and sympathy, have been written by Addison.

One lady stands out prominently as a prose-writer, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, much remembered for her famous friendship and subsequent quarrel with Pope. Her husband was Ambassador at the Porte, and she described her life in the East in a series of delightful letters, published in 1763, the year after her death. It is in one of these letters that she speaks of the Turkish custom of inoculation for small-pox, and, it is said, allowed the experiment to be tried on her own child. She is a lively, spirited writer, and takes a wide view of character and life.

Philosophical prose of the period is represented by *Shaftesbury's Characteristics* (1711), essays on men, manners, opinions, and times; *Bolingbroke's Letters on Patriotism* and *Idea of a Patriot King* (1749); *Mandeville's Fable of the Bees* (1723), written in a cynical spirit to show that society prospers through vice, and would be ruined by becoming virtuous.

Bishop Berkeley (1685-1753), a deep thinker and a most noble-minded man, belonged to the circle of Pope and Swift. His philosophical works, *The Minute Philosopher* and *Siris*, were written against the fashionable materialism of the age. His mind was full of great philanthropic schemes for the benefit of mankind, and in his own diocese of Cloyne in Ireland he proved an almost ideal Bishop.

Another writer who protested against materialism and the cynical writings of Swift and Mandeville was *William Law*. He lived almost as a religious recluse during his later years. His great work, *A Serious Call to a Devout Life*, published 1729, was the finest devotional treatise in the English language since Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying."

Bishop Butler's is the greatest name in the history of the theological and philosophical literature of the eighteenth century.

Butler, 1692-1752. He was made Bishop of Durham in 1750. The great work of his life was *The Analogy of Religion* (1736), in which is worked out the connection between natural and revealed religion. "Revelation," he writes, "is an authoritative publication of natural religion, and so affords the evidence of testimony for the truth of it."

Early in the eighteenth century prose fiction had a valuable addition in the publication of *Defoe's Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

Fiction: Defoe, 1661-1731. Defoe's career was closely connected with political life, and not always in a very creditable manner. He was an active pamphleteer and journalist on the Whig side, and was not at all scrupulous in the means he took to further the interests of his party.

In 1701 he wrote some satirical verses entitled *The True-born Englishman*, in which the popular objections to William of Orange as no true-born Englishman were ridiculed. *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1703) was a clever pamphlet professing to advocate the pillory, halter, and even the stake, for the obstinate sectarians! So cleverly was the character of the Tory High Churchman maintained that the pamphlet was taken as serious, and highly applauded in High Church circles. When the author was discovered to be a Dissenter and a Whig, great indignation was shown, and Defoe was thrown into prison. In prison he began a Whig newspaper, *The Review*, and when released in 1704 devoted himself almost entirely to this work. His later works take chiefly the form of narratives and romances, and among these *Robinson Crusoe* was undoubtedly his masterpiece. The story is probably founded on the adventures of Alexander Selkirk, who had lived for some years on the desert island of Juan Fernandez. The book stands very high in narrative literature; the story is a fascinating one, told with great vigour and clearness, the adventures are never beyond the range of possibility, and the apparent truthfulness of the whole adds greatly to its charm.

The success of "Robinson Crusoe" encouraged Defoe to write several other tales of adventure, "Captain Singleton," "The Memoirs of a Cavalier," "Roxana," and so on.

The "Journal of the Plague year," published 1722, a most vivid description of the horrors of the Great Plague, was taken for some time to be a contemporary account, but was really little more than an ingenious romance, built up upon a few facts which had made a vivid impression on the childhood of Defoe, who could not have been more than five years old at the time.

One of his early pamphlets is specially interesting as containing anticipations of reforms, many of them only carried out in quite recent times. This is his *Essay on Projects*, which suggests insurance offices, a savings bank for the poor, a literary academy like that of France, a college for the higher education of women, the improvement of hospitals and asylums, and so on.

"Robinson Crusoe" has sometimes been called the first English novel; but in reality it is not a novel, but simply a tale of adventure. It shows a distinct advance on earlier attempts at fictitious writing, and in its realistic pictures of life and character brings us one step nearer to the modern novel.

The genuine novel should be a study of human life and character as it really is, accompanied by such development of various circumstances as to form a plot. In the Elizabethan romances, such as "Euphues" and "Arcadia," the characters

Character of Earlier Fiction.

are often shadowy and unreal, and the circumstances far removed from the experience of the ordinary reader. A number of episodes, more or less improbable, strung loosely together form the nearest attempt to a plot that exists. English fiction of the seventeenth century consisted chiefly in translations and imitations of French or Spanish romances, in which there was no attempt at the portrayal of real life and character. It was to the stage that men looked when they wanted to see a picture of life as it really was; and when, in the middle of the eighteenth century, the true novel was first produced, it was

by men who knew how to adapt dramatic art to the principle of story-telling.

One of the first of these was *Samuel Richardson*, who spent most of his life as a hard-working printer, and rose to be

Master of the Stationers' Company. His first
Richardson, novel, *Pamela* (1740) was written almost by
1689-1761.

accident. In 1739 he was asked by a firm of booksellers to write a manual of correspondence which would be of use to uneducated people. Richardson had, as a young man in his country home, often amused himself by writing love-letters for the girls of the village to their absent lovers. He began, then, a series of letters purporting to be from a young girl in service to her parents. Getting interested in his subject, he gave up the original design of the model correspondence, and worked up the history of this young maid-servant into a regular plot. The girl, who is called Pamela, displays remarkable patience and virtue in the midst of terrible temptation and persecution. The book was very well received, and was followed in 1748 by *Clarissa Harlowe*. This novel is again cast in the form of letters. Clarissa is a young lady of good family, who flees from her home to avoid being forced into matrimony, and throws herself on the protection of Lovelace, the man she cares for and whom she believes worthy of confidence. He betrays her trust to the uttermost, and she dies broken-hearted. The letters fall into two groups, those written by Clarissa to a girl friend, and those written by Lovelace to his friend Belford.

Sir Charles Grandison, written in 1753, takes us into higher society still, and is not a success, as Richardson knew nothing of the life he tries to describe. Sir Charles himself is a model of all the virtues, but is far too much of a prig to gain our admiration or sympathy. Thus Richardson's three novels deal respectively with humble life, middle-class life, and high life. It is in the second of these that he achieved his masterpiece. In all he employs the same device of relating his story in a series of letters. He is essentially the novelist of sentiment, and as such has been very popular on the Continent. No touch

which serves to lay bare the heart of his character is neglected, his work is microscopic in its detail, and the action of the plot (such as it is) is delayed, while we have the reflections of each writer on every incident narrated given in the most faithful minuteness. Dr. Johnson, a great admirer of Richardson as a portrayer of the human heart, writes: "If you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself. You must read him for the *sentiment*, and consider the story only as giving occasion to the sentiment."

Henry Fielding was a man of higher class and wider experience than Richardson, and this greater width is reflected in his

novels. He was educated at Eton, and went
Fielding, to Leyden to study law. He returned to
1707-1754.

London in 1728, and began his literary life by writing for the stage. His comedies were clever and humorous, but have been almost forgotten in the light of his subsequent work. In 1737 he began to work for the English Bar, and was called in 1740. His first work, *Joseph Andrews* (1742), was begun as a parody on "Pamela." The first few chapters give us the history of a virtuous man-servant, Joseph Andrews, brother to Pamela, who is placed in exactly corresponding circumstances of temptation. But after the first the burlesque character is abandoned, and the book becomes a novel of adventure. One of its characters at least has become immortal. This is Parson Adams, in whom Fielding drew a charming picture of a learned but simple-hearted old clergyman.

The *History of Tom Jones* (1749), is Fielding's masterpiece. Squire Allworthy, a model of a good English gentleman, has adopted two boys: Tom Jones, a foundling, and his nephew, young Blifil. Tom is a warm-hearted scapegrace, and Blifil turns out a smooth-faced hypocrite, whose outward decorum of life thoroughly deceives the world in general. The heroine, Sophia, the daughter of a fox-hunting, hard-drinking country squire, is a pure-hearted, affectionate girl, who grieves over Tom's misdemeanours, but has always faith in his truthful nature and his warm heart. After much suffering amendment does come, and the book ends with their marriage.

Amelia, in 1757, was a tribute to noble womanhood. In the heroine he drew a picture of his first wife.

Fielding's novels are life-like pictures of the English life of his day, and of English men and women ; he uses elaborate plots for the development of their characters, and does not give us a minute analysis of the sentiments and motives of each individual, as Richardson does. He has a fine sense of humour, quite Shakespearean in its loving toleration of human frailty and its appreciation of the grotesque as well as the pathetic side of life.

A novelist whose name is constantly associated with Fielding's, but who is not his equal, is *Tobias Smollett*. Smollett

Smollett, was the grandson of a Scotch Baronet, who
1721-1771. provided a good education for him, but died before he was fairly launched in life. He had to take a post as surgeon's assistant on a man-of-war. He settled for a short time in Jamaica, where he married, and returned in 1744 to London ; here he gained a very precarious livelihood by his pen. He published his first novel, *Roderick Random*, in 1748, a tale of sea life and adventure. *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, 1751, is a novel of much the same type, having a daring young rascal as its hero. Both stories are full of boisterous humour, and they contain coarsely realistic pictures of seafaring life. The heroes have all the vices of Tom Jones, and none of his redeeming virtues.

In 1758 Smollett wrote his *History of England*, a task really beyond his powers, but which from the liveliness of its style gained a good deal of contemporary applause. The next year he was thrown into prison for some political writings, but while there he went on editing his newspaper, *The Critical Review*, and working at fresh novels. His health broke down from incessant work, and he spent the last years of his life in Italy, dying at Leghorn in 1771. His best novel, *Humphrey Clinker*, belongs to the last year of his life. The plot is slender, and contrasts with his early novels in being a quiet picture of every-day life. There is some admirable character-drawing and plenty of humorous incident.

Lawrence Sterne, the son of an Irish soldier, was born in 1713. He spent his early years in travelling with his father's

Sterne,
1713-1768. regiment from barrack to barrack, a life which no doubt gave him ample opportunity of seeing life and character. Through the generosity of

a relation he was sent to Cambridge, where he took his degree, qualified for Holy Orders, and had a small living in Yorkshire conferred on him. Here he spent twenty years, not as an ideal clergyman, but living a selfish, pleasure-seeking life. His first book, *Tristram Shandy* (1759), brought him sudden success, and he went up to London to enjoy his triumph. Here he became the idol of society, and plunged into all the excitements of London life. His health suffered, and he spent his remaining years chiefly in travel. "*Tristram Shandy*" reached nine volumes, ranging from the first two in 1759 to the last in 1766.

His travels were related in *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, published in 1765.

"*Tristram Shandy*" is famous for its clever character sketches. Mr. and Mrs. Shandy, the parents of the very shadowy hero (who does not appear as an infant even until the third volume, and is not mentioned at all in the last two), Uncle Toby, an old soldier, and Corporal Trim, his servant; Widow Wadman and Mr. Yorick, have all lived on as types of English character. It is full of grotesque contrast and humorous dialogue, and the pathos is very genuine, except in the few cases where the self-consciousness of the author has marred its worth. The sentimental side of Sterne's nature comes out in "*The Sentimental Journey*," which has not found so many admirers in England as in France. But this softer element was needed in English fiction, and where it did not become morbid and artificial it supplied a want.

Richardson and Sterne may be considered leaders in the school of novelists that cultivated sentiment for its own sake, and which later in the century, much influenced by French thought, maintained in their works the superiority of the impulses of the heart to the established and artificial rules of society.

PERIOD VIII

THE DICTATORSHIP OF JOHNSON—THE DAWN OF THE NATURAL SCHOOL

Later Augustan poets—The Literary Club—Johnson, Goldsmith, and contemporaries—Romantic fiction—Historians—Precursors of the naturalistic school (Cowper, Burns)—Chatterton and Macpherson.

THE poets of the later Augustan period show a distinct reaction from the artificial, classical school. In the younger

poets the love of Nature began to revive, and there is some return to the natural style of the Elizabethan period. They form a transition school, still strongly influenced by Pope in their style, but distinctly anticipating in spirit the naturalistic school of the close of the eighteenth century.

Edward Young was one of the earliest of these poets. He was educated at Oxford, and became a King's Chaplain in 1728. He wrote a great deal of poetry, much of it being of a very ponderous nature. His best work, *Night Thoughts* (1742), has some fine descriptions of Nature; his fancy is rich and his style dignified. He uses blank verse, which had been much neglected since the fashion had set in of writing in heroic couplets.

In the work of *John Dyer*, an artist, the Elizabethan love of Nature is revived strongly. Some passages from *Grongar Hill* (1726), remind us of Milton's "L'Allegro," and contrast strongly with the artificial descriptions of scenery of the classical school.

The same spirit appears in the works of *Allan Ramsay*, a Scotch poet, who gives us some genuine pastoral poetry.

The Gentle Shepherd (1725) is a pastoral play in five acts, written in homely dialect, and giving a true picture of rural life.

The greatest of these early "natural" poets was *James Thomson*. He was son of a Scotch minister, and educated at Edinburgh. In 1726 he came to London,

Thomson,
1700-1748. and held a tutorship in a nobleman's family.

He soon became known in the literary circle which gathered around Pope. He was a man of great kindness of heart and fidelity in friendship, and there was very general regret when he died somewhat suddenly in 1748.

His great work, *The Seasons*, was written between the years 1726 and 1730. There is still a good deal of the artificial school in Thomson's style, but there is a real love of Nature pervading the whole, and the descriptions of rural life and scenery show a great advance on anything else written on the subject during the first half of the eighteenth century. Book I., "Winter," describes the rigour of a winter on the Cheviots. Every detail in the desolate scene is painted, and the effects of the intense cold on vegetable and animal life is graphically described. In Book II., "Spring," there is still greater imaginative power. The awakening of Nature is described, and "mating-time" leads Thomson to a digression in praise of love. Book III., "Summer," is full of episodes, which are some of them too fully worked out. Thomson is best in describing such scenes as he must have seen himself—sheep-shearing, for example. Book IV., "Autumn," gives us harvest-time, and the pleasures and pursuits of the later season, such as shooting and hunting.

In 1740 Thomson wrote a masque, *Alfred*, in which appears the national song, "Rule, Britannia."

The Castle of Indolence (1748) is an allegorical poem written in Spenserian stanzas. Canto I. describes the castle of the false enchanter, Indolence, and its inhabitants; Canto II., the conquest of the castle by a knight of "Arts and Industry."

The poem is quite Spenserian in spirit and style. The castle, with its assemblage of all the sights and sounds which invite repose and sleep, reminds us forcibly of Spenser's "House of Morpheus," Canto I., "Faerie Queene."

Another admirer and follower of Spenser was *Shenstone*, a Shropshire farmer, in whom the love of Nature was strong. His chief works are *The Schoolmistress* (1742) and *Pastoral Ballads* (1743).

Akenside's Pleasures of the Imagination (1744) was suggested by the papers on the imagination in the "Spectator." He was a man of lofty ideals, and his poetry is always pure and dignified, but the style is pompous and artificial.

William Collins, educated at Winchester and Oxford, was a friend of Thomson, and found a staunch patron in Dr. Johnson.

Collins, 1721-1756. He is famous for his lyric power. He published a collection of odes in 1747 and, in 1749, "Ode on the Death of Thomson," and an "Ode on the

Popular Superstitions of the Highlands." The poem beginning

"How sleep the brave who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blessed!"

should be read as an example of the charm of Collins' short odes.

A poet often associated with Collins, and one who marks more distinctly than any other the "meeting of the ways," the classical and the romantic, is *Thomas Gray*.

Gray, 1716-1771. He was a man of vast learning and of much poetic feeling and power. Educated at Eton and

Cambridge, he made friends with Horace Walpole, and during the years 1738 to 1741 travelled with him through France and Italy. On his return he settled down at Cambridge, and made it his home for the rest of his life. He was made Regius Professor of Modern History, and led the cultured student's life which suited him so well. Gray did not produce much poetry, but what he did brought him great contemporary popularity. It has been said of Gray, that "of all English poets he was the most finished artist"; and certainly,

without sacrificing anything of the smooth perfection of style which had been won for English poetry by such great poets as Dryden and Pope, he managed to excel also in natural expression. Thus poets began to acknowledge that Nature and Art must go hand-in-hand.

The *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, his best-known poem, was not rated so highly by its author. Its smooth rhythm, gentle philosophic reflections, minute observation of scenery, will always make the poem justly admired. Other contributions to the poetry of Nature are *The Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, *Ode on Spring*, *on Adversity*, *on the Death of a Favourite Cat*.

Two Pindaric odes were published in 1758: *The Progress of Poetry*, a survey of the history of poetry from classical times to the death of Dryden, and *The Bard*, a romantic poem which represents one of the Celtic bards, killed by Edward I., as prophesying at the hour of death the misery and ruin which will come on the great King's descendants in the civil wars of Lancaster and York. Both these odes contrast, in their fire and passion, with the calm philosophy of "The Elegy." In Gray's love for mediæval legend and myth, brought out in such poems as "The Bard" and "The Descent of Odin," we see clear anticipations of the romantic movement in poetry.

The great literary dictator who from Pope's time on towards the close of the century exercised a firm and just

sway over the world of letters was *Samuel Johnson*, 1709-1784.

He was the son of Michael Johnson, bookseller, of Lichfield. He was a sickly child, and one of his first recollections was being touched by Queen Anne for king's-evil. His eyesight suffered from the disease, and he was all his life subject to curious convulsive movements of the body. His powers of mind developed early; he had a marvellous memory, great powers of observation, and insatiable thirst for books. He went to Lichfield Grammar School, but left at the age of sixteen. In 1728, by the help of friends, he was able to enter at Pembroke College, Oxford. Here he was deeply influenced by the reading of Law's

"Serious Call." Johnson was by inheritance a strong High Churchman and Tory ; in theory he was an upholder of all authority, in practice he was democratically independent, scouted any attempts at patronage from his superiors by rank or wealth, and was said to have kicked downstairs a pair of new shoes (sorely needed) which an officious benefactor had put at his door. In 1731 Johnson left Oxford ; his father died the same year, and left him quite destitute. His first attempt to earn his own living was as an usher in a school ; it was an unhappy experience, and in 1733 he left, and tried his hand at writing for a local paper. Two years later, though still poor and without prospects, Johnson married a widow, Mrs. Porter, nearly twenty years older than himself. She was unattractive and quite his inferior in cultivation, but Johnson was blind to all her defects, and made her the most loyal and devoted of husbands. He then opened a school at Edial, near Lichfield. Very few pupils came, but one was the famous David Garrick, who to his credit learnt to appreciate the true man under the external roughness and eccentricity of his master. The school failed, and Johnson and Garrick determined to try their fortune in London. Garrick soon met with success on the stage, but Johnson had a long and weary struggle for existence, a struggle so painful that in later years the brave old man could not speak of it without tears. Grub Street, which since about the middle of the seventeenth century had been the usual resort of needy literary men, was Johnson's home at this period ; but he was not among the number of those who daily sold their talents to the highest bidder, spent the money in dissipation and extravagance, and, when there was no further sale for their services, died from disease and starvation. Johnson often came as near starvation as any, and had to walk the streets at night because he could not afford a night's lodging ; but the work that he did was always honest, and he never truckled to the favour of any patron or any political party.

His chief work at this time was the writing of articles for the "*Gentleman's Magazine*," and acting as a Parliamentary

reporter, as reporting under certain restrictions was then allowed at Westminster. He made the close acquaintance of another needy poet, Richard Savage, a man of irregular genius and very ill-balanced character. In spite of the help of many influential friends, among whom were numbered Queen Caroline, Pope, and Steele, Savage threw away all his chances in life recklessly, wasted his money, quarrelled with his patrons, and died in a debtors' prison. It is characteristic of Johnson's warm heart and faithful nature that he overlooked, in sympathy for Savage's misfortunes, all the faults in him of which he had least tolerance himself, and wrote a eulogistic life of the young poet soon after his death.

This *Life of Mr. Richard Savage* (1744), was Johnson's first prose work, but it had been preceded in 1738 by a long poem, *London*, an imitation of one of Juvenal's satires, as was also his next poem of any importance, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, published 1749. In both poems something of the sadness of his experience as a struggling author is brought out :

"Slow rises worth by poverty depressed ;
But here more slow where all are slaves to gold,
Where looks are merchandise and smiles are sold."

In 1749 Garrick, now manager of Drury Lane Theatre, offered to produce for Johnson a tragedy, *Irene*, which he had written before he came to London. The play was dull and heavy, and achieved no success; but, as the stage was more productive than any other field of labour, "*Irene*" was well paid for.

The years 1747 to 1755 were occupied by a far more ambitious work. The first plan or scheme of the work was drawn up in the form of a prospectus dedicated to Lord Chesterfield, as a patron of letters. Chesterfield carelessly sent £10 towards the subscription-list, and took no further interest in the matter, until the work, by its uniqueness and worth, had attracted considerable attention, when he wrote laudatory notices of it and its author to be inserted in "*The World*." Johnson resented this tardy patronage, and declined the help of Chesterfield in a manly, straightforward letter. *The Dictionary*, though not a great monetary success, secured

Johnson's fame, and placed him on a throne among his fellows, as a worthy successor over the realm which had owned the rule of Ben Jonson, Dryden, and Pope.

Nothing resembling the Dictionary had been attempted before in England. The study of etymology was quite in its

infancy, so that, as regards the derivation of words, Johnson's work is chiefly guesswork, and quite unreliable; but what he did succeed in is giving a comprehensive, generally accurate, and always ingenious definition of a word, and adding passages in illustration of the sense in which the word may be used. These passages alone make the book most interesting and valuable.

As a diversion from the labours of the Dictionary, Johnson had produced a paper of "The Spectator" type entitled *The Rambler*. It came out from 1750 to 1752. Nearly all the essays were his own work, but he was not successful in this form of writing, which needs a lighter touch than his. *The Idler* (1758-1760) was a later attempt to revive the same form of literature.

Rasselas, the Prince of Abyssinia, Johnson's one romance, was written within the space of a week, to pay for the expenses of his mother's funeral. It is more "Rasselas," of the nature of a moral essay than a novel, as

1759. it consists chiefly of a series of conversations between the characters on the philosophical questions of life. *Rasselas* has been brought up in the "happy valley" among ideal surroundings; he is taken out and shown life, with its sorrows and joys, and bidden take his choice.

On the accession of George III. Johnson was offered a pension of £300. He hesitated to accept it, until he was assured that it was granted as a recognition of his past work, and as no bribe for future support of the Government. From this time forth there was no further fear of want before his eyes. Shortly after this he made the acquaintance of James Boswell, who became his most ardent disciple, and to whom we owe, in his "Life of Johnson" the most perfect biography

in English literature. Vain, self-conscious, and childishly curious, as Boswell undoubtedly shows himself, he had the merit of recognising a great and noble man beneath a rough, unattractive exterior, and he loved Johnson with a faithful devotion, which won in time some response from his idol. In 1773 Boswell induced his friend to accompany him on a journey to Scotland. The expedition was not altogether successful; Johnson disliked the Scotch before he started, the weather was bad, and neither of the travellers had any natural enthusiasm for fine scenery. However, Johnson could not help taking an intelligent interest in his surroundings, and the next year he gave an account of his experiences in his *Visit to the Hebrides*.

In 1764 the *Literary Club* had been founded, and Johnson had soon been acknowledged as its leading spirit. The meetings of the club were held at the Turk's Head Inn, Soho, and such men as Goldsmith, Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, and Sheridan formed the brilliant circle which surrounded Johnson. In conversation he excelled, enjoying nothing so much as a good argument. He would work himself up sometimes into a fury of eloquence over a subject which stirred him deeply, but was always penitent afterwards, if he had inflicted pain unnecessarily, and never lost friends through his uncontrolled sarcasm as Pope did.

In 1775 the University of Oxford conferred on him the LL.D. degree, an honour which gratified him deeply. His latest work, *The Lives of the Poets*, was written

"**Lives of the Poets.**" by request of his publishers, who proposed to bring out collections of the various poets' works, with lives prefixed. It is one of the ablest of his works, and shows his style at its best. His earlier prose had been distinguished by heaviness and pedantry, by a tendency to pompous verbosity, which has given the name "Johnsonese" to this style of writing; but Johnson could be as clear, concise, and dignified in his writing as in his speech, and his best qualities come out in the "Lives." They do not represent English literature completely by any means. The publishers

of the day knew of no poetry worthy of the name before that of Cowley and Waller ; therefore the great Elizabethan epoch remains unrepresented. His common-sense, sound judgment, and keen observation make him an excellent critic, except in such cases as that of Milton, where political and religious prejudice lead him astray.

He spent much of his time latterly with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, warm friends and admirers ; but on the death of Mr. Thrale a coldness grew up between his wife and Johnson, who did not approve of her proposed second marriage. Johnson died December, 1784, of a complication of disorders, and was buried in Westminster. He was surrounded by friends to the last, and no man was more lamented. His home, even in the days when no settled income was secured to him, and the wolf was never very far from the door, had been the refuge of a number of social waifs and strays, who but for him must have starved. They grumbled at his hospitality and quarrelled among themselves ; but he who reigned supreme at the Literary Club, and whose will was never contradicted by equals and superiors, showed his true greatness in his unfailing gentleness and considerations to these poor creatures who were so dependent upon him. *Boswell's immortal Life of Samuel Johnson* was published in 1791, and dedicated to Joshua Reynolds, also an intimate friend of the great doctor and a prominent member of the Literary Club.

Inseparably connected with the name of Johnson is that of *Oliver Goldsmith*. He was born in Ireland, his father being a

poor clergyman of English extraction. He was Goldsmith, sent to Trinity College, Dublin, through the 1728-1774.

kindness of an uncle, but his career there was most unsatisfactory. He left deeply in debt in 1749, and, after some desultory attempts at gaining a livelihood through teaching, he determined to study, and went to Edinburgh in 1753, and the next year to Leyden. During the next two years he seems to have travelled through Europe like a beggar, gaining occasional alms by playing on the flute. He always claimed to have taken a medical degree whilst in Italy, but

there is every reason to doubt the accuracy of this assertion. In 1756 he arrived in London, and spent the next eight years in a hard struggle for existence. He served successively as a chemist's assistant, usher in a school, bookseller's hack, printer's corrector. He was able to find quite enough employment from booksellers to secure him from want if he had not been recklessly extravagant with his earnings, given to expensive amusement, and fond of gambling. Even after his name became known and popularity was secured, periods of prosperity alternated with periods of abject poverty, and this continued to the day of his death. In 1761 he made the acquaintance of Johnson, and he became a brilliant member of the literary circle which frequented the Turk's Head. With all his faults and follies, Goldsmith's kind heart and generous impulses made him a universal favourite. In 1774 he fell seriously ill, is said to have aggravated the matter by prescribing for himself, and died leaving £2,000 debt behind him. Dr. Johnson, in his famous epitaph, tells us that Goldsmith left hardly "any kind of writing untouched, and touched none that he did not grace." His poetry is remarkable for its naturalness and ease; he describes what he has seen in the varied experience of his life, and all with the most delicate refinement of touch. The same charm of simplicity, grace, and clearness characterizes his prose writings, notably his masterpiece, "The Vicar of Wakefield." In humour and pathos he is almost unrivalled, and his clever character-drawing in the Vicar and his family, and the Harcastles in "She Stoops to Conquer," has rarely been surpassed.

The Traveller, the first poem published in his own name, appeared in 1764. It is a didactic poem in which the moral taught, incidentally through a series of pictures of life in various lands is that one form of government is as good as another as far as happiness is concerned. *The Deserted Village* (1770) is a more finished poem in its details, but it has the same easy grace of style. He himself tells us its object is to supply an elegy on the expiring race of peasants, and to inveigh against the

Longer
Poems.

luxury of the age. Goldsmith's reasoning is, however, neither clear nor convincing ; he often confuses luxury with civilization and progress in trade, and we read his poems, not for their theories of life, but for the charming pictures of rural life and sketches of character. "Sweet Auburn," in its prosperous days the most ideal of villages, the village parson and schoolmaster, are all vignettes worthy of Chaucer. Of Goldsmith's shorter poems, we have the ballads inserted in the "Vicar of Wakefield," *Edwin and Angelina* and the *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog*, the latter full of humour. *Retaliation* is a playful satire on his friends, members of the famous Literary Club. Garrick is touched off in a few lines :

"On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting ;
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting."

Burke was :

"Though equal to all things, for all things unfit ;
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit,
For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,
And too fond of the *right* to pursue the *expedient*."

Of Reynolds he writes :

"Still born to improve us in every part ;
His pencil, our faces ; his manners, our heart ;
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering ;
When they judged without skill, he was still hard of hearing.
When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet and only took snuff."

When we turn to his prose works, we have the essays appearing as *The Citizen of the World*, in which there are clever and humorous sketches of society, and his more serious writings, most of them undertaken to order, and therefore not his best work ; his Roman History, History of England, History of Animated Nature, belong to this class of writing.

The *Vicar of Wakefield* stands by itself as his one attempt at fiction. The story has often been told of the first production of the book : that Johnson rescued Goldsmith from being sold

up for debt by selling for him the rough manuscript to the publisher Newberry for £60. Newberry took

"*Vicar of Wakefield*," it with some hesitation, but he need have had no fear; it ran through five editions in Gold-

smith's lifetime, and has since been translated into every European language. As a novel, "*The Vicar of Wakefield*" is not perfect; there is a great want of construction, and it is full of inconsistencies arising from hurried writing and want of revision. But with all that it is one of the most fascinating books ever written. The story, though improbable, is never wanting in interest; the characters are very real, and the language put into their mouths always appropriate. The "little fishes" talk like little fishes, the "whales" like whales.

The character of the Vicar alone is enough to have made Goldsmith's reputation. He belongs to a type of character which reappears from time to time in literature, and has never failed to call forth genuine affection. Such creations are Don Quixote, Sir Roger de Coverley, Colonel Newcombe, Mr. Pickwick, all pure-minded, true-hearted, simple men full of the "milk of human kindness," not without their foibles and weaknesses, but whose very "vices leaned to virtue's side."

One point specially interesting to notice in "*The Vicar of Wakefield*" is that before the dawn of the so-called naturalistic school, one of whose most distinctive characteristics is love of humanity, we find Goldsmith suggesting prison reforms such as were unheard of in his day. He protests against the inflicting of capital sentences for comparatively trivial offences, and he pleads that prisoners should be treated with humanity and given suitable employment, and that punishments, when necessary, should be in proportion to the offence, and remedial, not vindictive, in nature. When we think of the noble work done since by John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, of the good service done for the cause by the writings of Charles Reade, Dickens, and others, it is well to remember that the earliest note was struck by Goldsmith when he shows us his good

old clergyman striving to humanize the social outcasts with whom his lot is cast in the debtors' prison.

To the drama Goldsmith contributed two famous comedies with well-conceived plots, full of humorous incidents, and quite free from the ingrained coarseness of the contemporary play. *The Good-Natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer* were well received at the time of their production, and have held the stage ever since.

Edmund Burke, a distinguished member of the Literary Club, was great as orator, statesman, and philosophical writer.

Burke,
1729-1797. He was the son of an Irish lawyer, was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and came to

London intending to qualify for the English Bar.

He soon gave up the idea and devoted himself to authorship. His *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* belongs to this period of his life. He entered Parliament in 1765, as member for Wendover, and also served as private secretary to Lord Rockingham. For the first twenty years and more of his political career Burke was a Constitutional Whig. The works of this period are *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* (1770), various writings on the subject of American taxation, including the famous speech delivered on this theme in 1774, *Speech on American Taxation*.

A little later Indian affairs absorbed his attention; he had a large share in drawing up the East India Bill of 1783, and took a most prominent part in the trial of Warren Hastings (1788-1795) for alleged injustice and extortion in his government of India. Burke's opening speech at the trial was a wonderful outburst of eloquence. The French Revolution of 1789 stirred Burke's nature to its very depths, and had a lasting effect upon his opinions. From the first he viewed the movement with great apprehension, and prophesied only ill results from its progress. His speeches and writings became intensely anti-revolutionary, and from henceforth the Tory party claimed him as their own. The works of this period are *Reflections on the French Revolution*, (1790), *Thoughts on French Affairs* (1796), *Letters on the Regicide Peace* (1797).

In 1794 he resigned his seat in Parliament, and, as his only son died soon after, he refused a peerage with the title Lord Beaconsfield, which was offered him. In 1797 he died, and was buried at Beaconsfield.

He was a man of warm sympathies, always roused by the sight of injustice or cruelty. When he embraced a cause, he became almost fanatical in his championship, as, for example, in his violent denunciations of Warren Hastings, and his refusal to see any redeeming points in the great struggle for liberty in France.

Burke was our greatest orator ; his powers of conversation were splendid, his mastery over English prose perfect.

Another highly-gifted Irishman, *Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, also belonged to the Literary Club. Sheridan was born in Ireland, and educated at Harrow, where he
Sheridan,
1751-1816. early showed his observing and critical power, but did not distinguish himself much in scholar-

ship. At Bath, where his family had settled, he made the acquaintance of a family of musicians, the Linleys. One of the daughters, being pursued by the unwelcome attentions of an elderly lover, found a warm champion in the impulsive Richard, who undertook to convey her to a French convent. Her father went in pursuit, but after about a year's interval the two young people were allowed to renew their acquaintance, and were shortly after married.

In 1775 Sheridan produced his first play, *The Rivals*. The first reception was a cold one, but after a few nights' acting the play took hold of the audience, and has continued to delight audiences ever since. The plot, though simple, is cleverly devised ; the dialogue is most witty, and the picture of Bath society of the time life-like. The same year *The Duenna* appeared as an operatic play, for which Linley supplied the music.

In 1777 *The School for Scandal* was produced, and at once achieved success. It is a clever sketch of the gossiping, slandering society of a fashionable watering-place. Lady Teazle, the country squire's daughter, who plunged into all

the dissipation of town society, but found her heart in the end, and Joseph Surface, the "man of sentiment" who is false to the backbone, are inimitably drawn.

The Critic followed in 1779. It is a clever satire on the rehearsal of an heroic play.

In 1776 Sheridan had taken Garrick's place as manager of Drury Lane, but he did not excel in the qualities required for such a post, and the theatre degenerated under him. In 1780 he turned his attention to politics; he joined the party which owned Charles James Fox as its head, and became a rival to Burke in eloquence, but he was not an enthusiast as Burke was. The crowning triumph of his life as an orator was the speech of impassioned eloquence in which he pleaded the cause of the Begums of Oude, as victims of the alleged cruelty of Warren Hastings.

The last few years of this erratic genius were miserable ones. As age advanced, Sheridan became more and more unmethodical and unbusiness-like. He failed to keep appointments and to pay his actors, and got hopelessly into debt himself. At the last he was saved from ending his days in a debtors' prison by the kindness of a friend.

David Garrick, 1776-1779, his friend and predecessor, was eminently great as a manager and actor. His written work is inconsiderable. Two plays, *The Lying Varlet* and *A Miss in her Teens*, are, however, still acted, and possess some considerable merit.

Romantic prose fiction, the true beginning of which is rightly ascribed to Scott, had yet its anticipation in the writings of a small group of novelists of the

Fiction of Late Eighteenth Century.

last decade of the eighteenth century. The strong characteristic of this group is the desire to awaken the spirit of wonder, hence the invariable introduction of the element of the supernatural. The *School of Terror* is the name which has been applied to these early romantic novels. Dr. Johnson pronounced upon the tendency, as upon most literary tendencies of his age. "To select a singular event," he says, "and

swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty, for he that forsakes the probable may always find the marvellous."

In 1765 appeared *The Castle of Otranto*, which professed to be the translation of an old Italian romance. It was the

Horace
Walpole,
1717-1797.

work of Horace Walpole, youngest son of the great statesman. After the corrupt fashion of the time, he had been made a rich man by the possession of many sinecure offices, and devoted a life of leisure to the pursuit of literature. His famous villa at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, became the resort of the chief literary men of the day. One of his hobbies was to have a private printing-press, and it was here that several of Gray's poems were first printed.

His chief works were: *A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England*, *Anecdotes of Painting*, *The Reign of Richard III.*, and one romance, *The Castle of Otranto*. In the second edition of his romance Walpole owns in the preface to its authorship. The story is full of mysteries and horrors; a colossal helmet makes its appearance very early in the story in the courtyard of the gloomy castle, and causes amazement and terror; mysterious knights appear and reappear to the unhappy inhabitants; secret panels and subterranean corridors play their usual part in adding to the general mystification. Gray said of this thrilling work that it "made some of his friends cry, and *all* feel afraid to go to bed at night." The *Old English Baron* of 1777 was a novel of the same type of romantic medievalism, but with a more commonplace and less awe-inspiring plot. It was the work of a lady novelist, *Clara Reeve*.

More famous still was the work of *Mrs. Radcliffe*, who produced several highly popular romantic novels. Her masterpiece is *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). The element of terror and mystery is at its height in this work. All the well-known expedients, so exhaustively employed since in this type of novel, appear in *Mrs. Radcliffe's* stories; but, unlike most of the School of Terror, she generally ends by clearing up all her mysteries, thus explaining away their real significance.

Her character-drawing is of the crudest ; all her heroines are equally beautiful, accomplished, gentle, and melancholy ; all her heroes frank, impetuous, daring ; all her villains dark, gloomy forms of almost superhuman sagacity and strength. In one respect Mrs. Radcliffe's work differs from other novelists of the same group. She introduces the background of scenery, and she shows the effect of natural surroundings on the moods and passions of her characters.

"The Mysteries of Udolpho" encouraged a young author, *Matthew Lewis*, to produce *The Monk* (1795), an exaggerated example of the novel of terror. A fanciful romance with an Eastern setting appeared about 1784, *The History of Vathek*. It was the work of *William Beckford*, an eccentric millionaire who had travelled in the East, and been much attracted by the spirit of Orientalism which had influenced French romantic writers of this period, as deeply as the spirit of medievalism had affected English. "Vathek" was written in French, and translated by its author.

The last great novel of terror was the *Frankenstein* of *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, written in 1818. Frankenstein is a monster created by a young student of science, who endues his creation with a species of life. The unfortunate creature thus called into existence manages to avenge himself upon his daring creator.

The eighteenth century produced three writers who excelled in history-writing, and raised it into the rank of true literature. First among these stands David Hume,

Historians : great as an historian and a philosopher. He
Hume,
1711-1776. was born in Edinburgh and educated there.

After some years of residence abroad, he settled down in England and devoted himself to literary work. His first works were philosophical : *A Treatise on Human Nature* and a volume of essays. In 1752 he was appointed Librarian to the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, and the next ten years or so were occupied in the great work of his life, the *History of England from the Conquest to the Revolution*. In 1763 he became Secretary to the English Embassy in Paris, and from

1767 to 1769 he held the office of Under-Secretary of State. He retired on a pension, and ended his days at Edinburgh.

Hume was a friend and admirer of Rousseau; he rejected the religion of revelation, and all his moral and philosophical writings are sceptical in tone. He was a subtle reasoner, and his style is admirably clear.

His "History of England," produced in four volumes during the years 1754 to 1761, may fairly claim to be the first scientific history written in English. He is not accurate by any means, partly because he despised his authorities too much to study them closely; he takes a calm, philosophical view of men and events, but his lack of imagination deprives his picture of the past of any vivid colouring.

A more picturesque historian was Hume's fellow-countryman and friend, *William Robertson*. He was a Presbyterian minister, who was finally elected Principal of Edinburgh University and Royal Historiographer for Scotland.
Robertson, 1721-1793.

His work was the result of careful research, and where he fails in accuracy according to the modern standard, it is chiefly because good authorities were inaccessible on some of the special periods he selected. His chief works are: *History of Scotland* during the reign of Mary and James VI. (1759), *History of Charles V.* (1769), and of *America*, 1777.

A still greater historian was *Edward Gibbon*. He was an extremely delicate boy, and had a desultory education up to the time of his going to Magdalen College, Oxford, about 1752. He joined the Roman Catholic Church, and his father, hoping to counteract this, sent him to live with a Swiss pastor at Lausanne. He became (nominally) a Calvinist under this teaching, but his attitude henceforth towards religious questions was one of philosophical scepticism. He returned to England in 1758, and served as a Captain in the Hampshire Militia for three or four years. Then he went abroad again, and travelled in Italy, France, and Switzerland. It was whilst he was musing among the ruins of Rome that
Gibbon, 1737-1794.

he thought out his great work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and set to work on it when he returned to England in 1765. The work took nearly twenty-four years to complete; it was published at various times, the first volume in 1776, the last three in 1788.

Eight years of this period were spent in Parliamentary work, Gibbon being elected M.P. for Liskeard in 1774, and firmly supporting the Government policy in the matter of America. In 1783 he bought a house at Lausanne, and retired there to finish his work. He died, however, in London in 1794, having returned there the year before.

The "Decline and Fall" traces the history of Rome from the reign of Marcus Aurelius to the fall of Constantinople. The "Decline and Fall" is a marvellous work, original in thought and treatment. It is not only a work of genius, but a wonderful testimony to the industry and research of the author. Gibbon has the rare art of making the past vivid and lifelike to us. Every detail which tends to make picturesque the life, not only of the Romans, but of the many nations that were rising on the ruins of the great Empire, is brought before us with accuracy and vigour. His style, always dignified and elaborate, has been severely criticised as pompous and un-English; indeed, it has been said that it is one of the easiest books to translate into French, owing to the great preponderance of Romanic words, expressions, and turns of thought. The great fault is in the contemptuous and scornful tone with which he approaches the subject of religion; he has no enthusiasms and no ideals, and he does not allow of them in his fellow-mortals; nothing escapes his "solemn sneer."

Adam Smith, a friend of Hume's, applied his philosophy to practical results in the investigation of wealth. His *Wealth of Nations* (1776) laid the foundation of modern

political economy. His theories that labour is the source of wealth, and that the labourer should be left free to pursue his own interests in his own way as the best means to promote the wealth of the

Adam
Smith,
1723-1790.

country, were new to most readers at the close of the eighteenth century, and this book was quite the first systematic treatise on the subject. His style was homely, but clear and forcible, and quite suitable to his theme.

The group of poets whose chief works lie within the last twenty years of the eighteenth century are the immediate precursors of the great naturalistic school. In them are to be seen all the elements of the great change which was so marked in literature during the last decade of the century, but which had gradually been showing itself from about the time of the death of Pope onwards.

The revived love of Nature, the interest in country life, in simple themes, the love of mankind, and the enthusiasm for all things which seemed for the benefit of the community—these are distinctive marks of the new school, and appear more or less in the poems of such poets as Cowper, Crabbe, and Burns.

William Cowper was the son of the Rector of Berkhamstead. His mother died when he was only six years old, and the child, who was very delicate, went through great misery at his first school. When he was ten years old he was entered at Westminster, and when eighteen put into a solicitor's office. In 1754 he entered at the Middle Temple. He was at this time engaged to his cousin, but there was in him such a strong tendency to insanity that his uncle insisted on the engagement being broken off. This had a most unhappy effect on Cowper, and in 1763 he was obliged to be placed in an asylum. After two years' skilful treatment he was able to come back among his fellow-men, and, looking out for a quiet country home, found kind and sympathetic friends in a clergyman and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Unwin, of Huntingdon. At Mr. Unwin's death Cowper moved with the widow and her children to Olney. There Cowper formed a close friendship with the curate of the church, John Newton, a man of strong Calvinistic views.

The connection was an unfortunate one; morbid melancholy gained ground with the unhappy poet, and he had another fit of insanity. Mrs. Unwin nursed him with the tenderest care, and on his recovery induced him to take up gardening to divert his thoughts from melancholy topics, and also encouraged him to begin to write.

Poems which belong to this period are *The Progress of Error*, *Table-Talk*, and *Truth*. Lady Austen, a near neighbour at Olney, became a cheerful and wholesome element in his life. She told him the story of *John Gilpin*, which he put into verse for her amusement, and it was she who suggested to him to write *The Task*.

He renewed his friendship with his cousin Lady Hesketh in 1786, and she paid him a visit and persuaded him and Mrs. Unwin to move from Olney. Cowper began to work at a translation of the "Iliad," but his work was interrupted by mental illness again, and was not published until 1791. In 1796 Mrs. Unwin died, and four years later Cowper himself died, worn out with sorrow and disease. He was a man of singularly lovable disposition. The most gentle and charitable of beings, he yet, under the influence of the morbid taint which spoilt his whole life, imagined himself shut out from the mercy of God. Yet this sad conviction never made him harsh or censorious to others; his sympathies were wide and keen, as is clearly evidenced in his writings, and in his brighter moments no man could be a more cheerful, humorous companion. In his writings Cowper more than any poet marks the great transition from the artificial to the natural style, from the classical to the romantic. In him we have the close observation of Nature—of flowers, animals, of the beauty of the clouds above, and of the varied "seasons as they roll." His sensitiveness to sights and sounds, the accuracy of his descriptions, all show that he is drawing from Nature at *first* hand. Love of mankind was a prominent feature in Cowper's poems. The great religious revival that began under the preaching of Wesley and Whitfield in 1738 had roused men to the corrupt state of society, and to the pressing need for

reform in most of our social institutions. Cowper, strongly patriotic as he was, was keenly alive to England's faults, and he put all his indignation against national vices, all his ardent desire to see the world purer and better, into his writings. Thus, Book II. of his longest work, "The Task," is entitled "The Timepiece"—i.e., the signs of the times—and contains a warm outpouring of his horror at slavery, and a severe satire on the state of the clergy and the Universities.

Cowper wrote a large number of short poems, most of them illustrating his simple tastes and love of home life. Such are the *Epitaph on a Hare*, the *Dog and the Water-Lily*, the *Lines on the Receipt of his Mother's Picture*, several addressed to Mary (Mrs. Unwin), and the *Loss of the Royal George*, a pathetic little poem on a great disaster. Cowper has given us many devotional poems in the collection known as the "Olney Hymns." Such hymns as "God moves in a mysterious way" and "When I survey the wondrous Cross," testify to his sincere devotion.

His longer poems are all didactic in tone. The most ambitious of these is *The Task*, so called because it was playfully "The Task," imposed on Cowper by Lady Austen, who had
1785. often begged him to write a blank-verse poem.

When he asked her to suggest a subject, she replied, "You can write on any subject; write on this sofa." So the first book was called "The Sofa," and begins by tracing the origin of the sofa; hence he passes with a word of pity for those who are confined to the sofa to the charms of out-of-door existence, and a comparison between the attractions of town and country life. Book II., "The Timepiece," deals with social evils of the time; Book III., "The Garden," with the charms of home. Book IV., "The Winter Evening," excels in natural description, and dwells on his favourite theme of the superiority of country life. Book V., "The Winter Morning's Walk," continues the beauties and charms of winter, which have found, comparatively speaking, so few warm advocates among our poets. A description of the famous ice palace, built to please Anne, Empress of Russia, in

1740, leads him to a digression on the whims of Kings, on war, their plaything, and on the nature of true freedom :

“He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides.”

Returning again to his main theme, the beauty of Nature, he ends with the noble words :

“But, oh, Thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown !
Give what Thou canst—without Thee we are poor,
And with Thee rich—take what Thou wilt away.”

The last book, “The Winter Walk at Noon,” begins with reflections on the associative power of sound. He describes the “winter walk,” and contrasts wisdom gained by the contemplation of God’s works with mere book knowledge :

“Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much,
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.”

Cowper goes on to plead the cause of animal creation against those who recklessly and wantonly sacrifice its life, and ends with a vision of the restoration of the fallen creation and the triumph of Christ’s kingdom on earth.

The characteristics of Cowper’s style are clearness and simplicity ; the only flaw on this latter quality as regards language is his love of introducing a Latinized word or phrase occasionally :

“The cup that cheers, but not *inebriates*,”

“The stable yields a *stercoraceous* heap,”

and so on. In his descriptions he is always natural and vivid, though in his passages of moral reflections he becomes sometimes prosy and commonplace.

In *George Crabbe* we have a poet who took up the poetry of mankind from its saddest point of view. Born at Aldborough, he was brought up as a doctor, but was not successful. He went to London to try his fortune in the literary world, and was helped by Burke. In 1781 he took Holy Orders and became curate

Crabbe,
1754-1832.

of Aldborough, and later private chaplain to the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir.

His chief works are *The Village*, *The Parish Register*, *The Borough*, and *Tales of the Hall*. They were written between the years 1783 and 1819. Byron calls Crabbe "Nature's sternest painter, yet the best." His sternness did not arise from hardness, but partly from the circumstances of his life, which had shown him much of the darker side of poverty, and partly from his great desire to impress the necessity for reform. We see depicted in him the evils of the Poor Law system, the cruelty of the oppressive game laws, the non-residence and indolence of the clergy, the brutality of the prison and the workhouse. Good men and women were already working for the reform of these evils, and now poetry was to add its powerful testimony, and to bring home to men's minds the sufferings of their fellow-creatures.

Robert Bloomfield, another Suffolk poet, was a shoemaker by trade. The Duke of Grafton gave him a small pension, which made it possible for him to give time to his literary work. *The Farmer's Boy* (1798) and "Rural Tales" (1810) give us pictures of happy country life and a good description of rural customs.

William Blake, artist and poet, was born in London. He was trained as an engraver, and illustrated, among other works, Young's "Night Thoughts." He had a curious and irregular genius, but he produced some poetry of great originality and charm.

His *Songs of Innocence* appeared in 1789. The introductory poem, "Piping down the Valley Wild," "The Lamb," and "The Tiger," are some of the best known and admired.

Songs of Experience, another collection of short poems, followed in 1794.

Very high in the ranks of those who sang of Nature and of man must be placed *Robert Burns*. He was the son of a small farmer, and born near Ayr.

He was well-educated at the village school, read a vast amount of English literature for himself, and,

as he grew up, took his share with his father and brothers in the management of the farm. Their farming was not highly successful, and, to raise funds for the emigration of the family, he published the first volume of his poems in 1786. Most of these had been composed as he followed the plough, and breathe the very air of country life. These poems gained for him at once popularity; he gave up the idea of emigrating, and went up to Edinburgh to arrange for the publication of a second volume. Popularity and success suited Burns very ill; he led a wild, dissipated life, and contracted habits of intemperance, which he never altogether abandoned.

In 1791 he married and settled down in Dumfriesshire, getting employment as an Exciseman. His work was hard and badly paid, and his well-known sympathies with the French Revolution brought him into serious trouble with the Government. Under the stress of anxiety and hard work his health, enfeebled by intemperance, broke down, and he died from the effects of fever in 1796.

Burns is the great poet of the Scottish Lowlands. When he writes, as he does occasionally, in English verse, he is formal, and almost commonplace; but in his Scotch poems he taught English readers to respect a race which they had been only too apt to ignore, and a language after all so nearly allied to their own, the direct descendant of the great Northumbrian dialect in which their own Cædmon had sung.

But in the spirit of his poems Burns is more than the typical poet of the Lowlands. He is a poet of universal fame, because, though influenced strongly by the spirit of his own age, he, like all poets of the highest order, shared in the life and movement of *all* ages; he takes for his theme those subjects of undying interest—Nature and mankind. “Does Homer interest us now,” Carlyle asks, “because he wrote of what passed beyond his native Greece and two centuries before he was born, or because he wrote of what passed *in God’s world and in the heart of man*, which is the same after thirty centuries?” This, then, is Burns’ claim to our sympathy: he writes of what he sees around him—the nest of the tiny

field-mouse turned up by his plough, the lark hovering over his head, the happiness of contented poverty, the rustic fortune-telling on All Hallows' E'en, and the pathos of human sorrow in bereavement.

The *Holy Fair* and *Holy Willie's Prayer* are satires on insincerity in religion, not, as has been represented, attacks upon religion itself.

His chief narrative poems are *Tam o' Shanter*, a humorous picture of the adventures of a horse-dealer who falls among the witches on returning late over Alloway Moor; *The Jolly Beggars*, which describes the uproarious gaiety of vagabond life; *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, a picture of contented peasant's life; and *Hallowe'en*, with its vivid local colouring.

But Burns' poetic genius excels in lyrics. *The Mountain Daisy*, *A Mouse's Nest*, *The Banks of Doon*, *The Red, Red Rose*, are only a few of the gems he has given us. For patriotic fire and vigour of expression it would be difficult to improve on *Bannockburn*, or for homely pathos on *Auld Lang Syne* and *Nancy*. But there is one poem which above all speaks of the man himself, of his proud independence of spirit, of his true estimate of man as man, of his wide sympathies with struggling humanity. In the last verse of *A Man's a Man for a' that* he anticipates, perhaps with the hopes raised by the French Revolution fresh in his mind, the coming of a golden age for all mankind:

"Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that;
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree and a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet for a' that;
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brothers be for a' that."

Two authors of the eighteenth century stand apart from any classification from the original character of their work. The English boy-genius *Chatterton*, who died before he completed his eighteenth year, and the Scotch schoolmaster *Macpherson*,

were both encouraged by the revived interest shown in the literature of the past, and the simple credulity of their readers, to produce some very remarkable literary forgeries.

Thomas Chatterton, the son of poor parents at Bristol, was educated in a charity school, and placed in an attorney's office. He was a clever, thoughtful boy, with a passionate attachment to antiquities and some gift for rhyming. From early childhood he had

Chatterton, 1752-1770. had free access to the wonderful old church of St. Mary Redcliffe, of which his uncle was the sexton. In the "parvis" chamber there he found and perused with great interest certain old parchments relating to the property of William Canynge, a merchant of Edward IV.'s reign, who had been a great benefactor to the church. The boy had picked up some knowledge of heraldry, and he soon devised the plan of inventing new MSS. which professed to relate the history of Bristol. Copies of these he sent from time to time to the local papers, and all were received with interest and pride, as testifying to the past grandeur of their city, by the good folk of Bristol. Most of these MSS. were professedly the work of a monk of the fifteenth century, Thomas Rowley, so that the collected forgeries were known as the *Rowley Poems*. Not content with having duped his fellow-citizens, this ambitious boy of sixteen sent one of his MSS., entitled *The Carvellers and Peyncters of Bristol*, to Horace Walpole, who was then engaged in writing his "Anecdotes of Painters." This was received with interest and credulity, for Walpole knew very little of the English of any period but his own, and Chatterton was ready to supply more MSS. in return for Walpole's help and patronage. When these were submitted to the more learned criticism of Gray and others, the forgery was discovered, and poor Chatterton, who had come to London in 1769 full of ambitious hopes, woke up to find that his poems would not sell, that the life of a young, unknown author in London spelt "starvation," and in a fit of misery and depression took a dose of poison only a few months after his arrival in London.

The forgeries of *James Macpherson* took the form of trans-

lations from supposed Highland poems. Macpherson was a Highland schoolmaster, who began his poetical career with a long poem called "The Highlander." In 1759, when travelling with some private pupils, he showed a friend a translation of Gaelic poetry. A subscription was raised in consequence to enable Macpherson to travel in the Highlands in search of more old MSS. The result of this was *Fingal*, an ancient epic written in six books, published 1762, and *Temora*, in 1763. These poems were very well received, and few doubted their genuineness. The poet, unlike poor Chatterton, became quickly prosperous, and was elected Member of Parliament. In 1789 he retired to his native parish, north of Perth, and built there a magnificent mansion for himself, "Belleville." He died in 1796, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. A fierce controversy arose over the "Poems of Ossian," as Macpherson's Gaelic poems were called. They deal with the heroic deeds and adventures of Fingal, an old Gaelic chief of the third century, and his son Ossian, warrior and bard.

There was no doubt a vast amount of traditional poetry in the Highlands, and Macpherson collected this and worked it up into various poems, but the existence of any original MSS. as a groundwork has long been utterly discredited.

That Anglo-Saxon or Gaelic poetry should be so intensely interesting to a large number of readers, and that the question of the authenticity of these MSS. should be worth disproving, is a strong sign of the times and of the change which had come over literary taste since Pope's days.

A book, the popularity of which pointed to the same change in taste, was published in 1765 entitled *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. Its author was Thomas Percy, a

Percy,
1729-1811.

clergyman who had given much time to the study of the romantic literature of the past, and not only to that of his own country. He became chaplain to the Duke of Northumberland, to whose family he probably belonged, and in 1782 he was promoted to an Irish bishopric

Dromore. His book, which exercised a great influence over Walter Scott among others, was a vast collection of ballads and lyrics, dating from the earliest time.

In his desire to popularize ballad literature, Percy tampered with the ancient texts of medieval times, translating the obsolete words into more modern ones, and often filling up gaps in the poems, which necessarily occurred, with stanzas of his own invention.

Warton's History of English Poetry, 1778, was also a step in the right direction in reviving interest in the literature of the past.

PERIOD IX

NATURAL SCHOOL : WRITERS TO 1830

Naturalistic or romantic school—Wordsworth and the “Lake Poets”—Campbell and Moore—Post-Revolution poets—Walter Scott—Group of women novelists.

A PERIOD in literature can never coincide exactly with an historical period ; the development of thought and feeling, influenced though it may be by action, does not admit of precise chronological arrangement.

The last years of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, however, certainly mark an epoch in poetry, when, as regards subject, the Romantic School. “classical” finally gave way to the “romantic,” and the temporary criticism of life and manners to the description of Nature, or of the joys and sorrows of mankind. In treatment, also, we have that setting of imaginative thought which had been so sadly wanting in the writings of the school of Pope.

This change was not altogether a new thing. Though no age exactly reproduces another, the work of the romantic school is in some sense a continuation of earlier literature. The elements of which it was composed were not unknown to Chaucer and his school, and were living forces to the Elizabethan writers. Still the *essence* of the *Romantic School* was very different from that of the earlier schools. The warm espousal of man as man, of the great interests which stir all human beings alike, the larger, fuller outlook on life, were certainly the development of a later civilization than that of

the fourteenth or sixteenth centuries. A great impetus had been given to these aspirations for the welfare of mankind by the outbreak of the French Revolution. The writings of Rousseau, which did so much to prepare the way for that great movement, influenced English literature, as a rule, indirectly, and a few authors very strongly.

The aspect of Nature, too, is a new one. The Elizabethan poets introduce it incidentally for the most part ; it acts as a background to man. Now Nature in its close relationship with man is brought before us ; the one is made to interpret the other, and the poet of the natural school joys in Nature for her own sake.

The greatest name among the poets of this school is that of William Wordsworth. He represents the philosophical side of the naturalistic school. He was a native

Wordsworth,
1770-1850. of Cockermouth, Cumberland, and together with his younger brother, Christopher, was sent by his uncle to Cambridge. He took his degree without any special distinction, and on leaving, in 1791, went abroad. He threw himself with great enthusiasm into the cause of the French Revolution, cherishing high hopes of its results in the emancipation of man.

“ Bliss was it in that dawn to be *alive*,
But to be *young* was very heaven.”

His enthusiastic hopes were destined to be grievously disappointed, and he had to pass through a period of depression and disillusionment before he attained to the calm, philosophic view of later days.

In 1793 he brought out his first poems, *Descriptive Sketches* and *An Evening Walk*, the former referring to his tour in Switzerland, and the latter to the neighbourhood of the Lakes. Both poems were more descriptive than reflective. Two years later, his circumstances having been rendered easier by a kind legacy, Wordsworth settled down at Racedown, in Somersetshire, with his sister Dorothy, always a most sympathetic helper in his work. Coleridge also visited him here,

and in 1797 Wordsworth and his sister moved to Alfoxden, to be close to Nether Stowey, where Coleridge lived.

In 1798, *Lyrical Ballads*, to which both poets contributed, appeared, and a few months later the friends started for Germany. Coleridge soon left the party, but Wordsworth and his sister did not return for a year, and then settled at Grasmere. Four years later he married, and the quiet, happy years which followed were marked by the production of some of his finest poems. Two volumes of poetry were published in 1807. In 1813 he moved to Rydal Mount, where he spent the rest of his life. He held the office of Stamp Distributer for the district, which brought him in a small annual income. In 1814 his longest poem, *The Excursion*, appeared. *The White Doe of Rylstone* and *Laodamia* followed in 1815, *Peter Bell* in 1819. The years between 1820 and 1830 there appeared a number of sonnets, a form of poetry in which Wordsworth excelled.

On Southey's death, in 1843, he became Poet Laureate, and he died at Rydal Mount in 1850. After his death was published "The Prelude," which, however, had been written as early as 1805.

Wordsworth's poetry has never been generally popular. This is partly because his calm, philosophic tone of mind does not appeal to every mind, and a certain amount of mental preparation is necessary before we can approach him with appreciation, and partly because he was singularly deficient in any sense of humour. This latter defect led him to produce a good deal of prosaic work, and in such poems as "The Idiot Boy" and "Peter Bell" to relapse into bathos. An appreciative contemporary critic, Professor John Wilson (known in literature by his *nom de plume* "Christopher North"), says of him: "We believe that Wordsworth's genius has now a greater influence on the spirit of poetry in Britain than was exercised by any individual mind. He was the first man who impregnated all his descriptions of Nature with sentiment and passion."

This attitude towards Nature is Wordsworth's most striking characteristic. He speaks of her as a living organism, and

dwells on her influence on the minds of men. He often shows his sympathy with the Greeks, who peopled every wood, mountain, and stream, with its own special deities :

“ The traveller slaked
His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
The Naiad. Sunbeams upon distant hills
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
Might with small help from fancy be transformed
Into fleet Oreads, sporting visibly.
The zephyrs, fanning as they passed, their wings
Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom they wooed
With gentle whisper.”

This passage illustrates also another characteristic—richness of imagination. Coleridge, who approaches him the most nearly of all his contemporaries, writes of him that “in imaginative powers he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton, and yet in a mind perfectly unborrowed and his own.” To employ his own words, which are at once an instance and an illustration, he does indeed to all thoughts and to all objects

add the gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the poet’s dream.”

In Wordsworth simplicity of style is united to purity of thought. Those who care least for him can find no fault but occasional dulness and puerility. He “uttered nothing base,” his great successor, Tennyson, writes, and his pure life and personality is reflected in every poem.

Wordsworth was a very prolific writer ; a good deal, therefore, of his poetry is written when no specially happy inspiration has seized him, but in every long poem, among passages of undoubted heaviness, we come to lines of exquisite harmony and beautiful thought, while some of his shorter poems, *The Skylark*, *The Happy Warrior*, *Daffodils*, *Yarrow Unvisited*, the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, and the *Ode to Duty*, are beautiful throughout.

The Prelude is the long poem of the early part of his life.

It is partly biographical, and gives the growth of the poet's mind. "The Excursion" (1814) is a philosophical poem, in which the mere skeleton of a narrative is clothed with Wordsworth's special teaching on Nature. The external world, he shows, is adapted to the mind of man, and its study is specially calculated to lead him higher.

Longer Poems.

The "White Doe of Rylstone" is a narrative poem with a sustained story. It is historical, and relates the misfortunes of a North-Country family during the rebellion of 1569. Something of the supernatural is introduced in the mysterious presence of the white doe.

"Laodamia" is Wordsworth's one poem, the subject of which is taken from classical sources.

In sonnet-writing Wordsworth has no superior and very few equals. This form of poetry had almost died out since Milton's time. In two of his sonnets Wordsworth specially commends this form. In *Scorn not the Sonnet* he speaks of the great poets of all nations who have used it, ending with his famous tribute to Milton's sonnets :

Sonnet- writing.

"In his hand
The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!"

And in *Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room* he again upholds the dignity of the sonnet :

"In truth, the prison unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is ; and hence to me,
In sundry mood, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the sonnet's scanty plot of ground."

Some of his finest are the descriptive ones : *To the River Duddon* ; *Earth has not anything to show more fair*, written on Westminster Bridge at sunrise ; *Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour* ; *To Freedom*, containing the famous lines :

"We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake, the faith and morals hold
That Milton held."

In *The world is too much with us* Wordsworth compares the interest and dignity of modern times with the past, very much to the disadvantage of the former.

Wordsworth was the centre of that brilliant group of writers so often spoken of as the "Lake School," not from any special connection which existed between their work in its aim or execution, but because they belonged for more or less of their life to the same locality. Southey, Coleridge, De Quincey, John Wilson (the "Christopher North" of *Blackwood's Magazine*), all settled in the Lake district, and these men were the leaders of thought in the literary world during the first thirty years or so of the nineteenth century.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was closely connected with Wordsworth throughout his life. His father was the Vicar of Ottery

St. Mary's, Devon, and he was educated at Coleridge, Christ's Hospital and Jesus College, Cambridge, 1772-1834. He was a dreamy, thoughtful boy, with apparently no ambitions for himself, but with a strong taste for reading. His first distinction was gained at Cambridge, where he carried off two prizes for Greek odes. He did not stay, however, to take his degree. He left hastily, partly on account of debt, and enlisted for the time as a private soldier. When his friends discovered this, he was discharged, and returned for a time to Cambridge. In 1794 he made the acquaintance of Southey, and they formed, with a third friend, Lovell, a socialistic scheme of community life, which they called "Pantisocracy." This scheme was to be put into practice on the shores of the Susquehanna; but the three friends were very poor and very unpractical, and their scheme was never put into execution. Coleridge was warmly Republican in his opinions at this period, and wrote his famous *Ode on France*. In 1796 he began a periodical called "The Watchman"; but Coleridge was not methodical enough for journalism, and the paper lasted only three months. About the same time he married the sister of Southey's wife, and settled down at Nether Stowey, where he made the acquaintance of Wordsworth and his sister. The two friends

anxious to raise money for a walking tour in Devon, planned to write a joint-poem. The result was *The Ancient Mariner*, to which Wordsworth contributed only a few lines. The project, however, grew : a volume of "Lyrical Ballads" was planned. "We are Seven" was Wordsworth's most striking contribution ; whilst Coleridge gave us "The Ancient Mariner" and *Frost at Midnight*.

Coleridge went abroad with the Wordsworths in 1798, and followed them to the Lake district in 1801, taking up his abode at Greta Hall, near Keswick. The next year Southey came to live with him, and the two families soon agreed to join households. In domestic life Coleridge was most unsatisfactory ; he became estranged from his wife, and in a few years' time absented himself almost entirely from home, and wandered about in search of health and happiness. Southey became a father to his friend's neglected children. Coleridge fell into the habit of taking opium, and became more and more indifferent to his duties as husband and father. In 1816 he placed himself under the care of a doctor at Highgate, and lived in his household for the last nineteen years of his life. His name had become well known, and he wrote for periodicals and delivered lectures, among which were the notable lectures on Shakespeare. He was a thoughtful critic and a good speaker, and exercised a strong fascination over those who were brought into close contact with him.

Coleridge's poetry is very small in quantity ; in quality it is of the very best. His verse is always musical ; his prose is pure and dignified. His matter is always full of thought, and all his work is enriched by his vivid imagination ; but, with all this merit, his work is wanting in steady purpose, it is often incomplete and ill-arranged ; the same want of stability that appeared in the poet's character was reflected in his writings.

Character
of his
Work.

The *Ode on the Departing Year*, 1796 ; *France*, in which he speaks of his sympathy with the first beginnings of the French Revolution, and his disappointment in the turn which affairs were taking, are among the best of his shorter poems. "Frost

at Midnight" is a good example of his imaginative power and his love of Nature. His two longer poems are "The Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel."

Coleridge, unlike Wordsworth, drew his themes from the unusual experience of life. A dream of a phantom ship, and the superstition that anyone shooting an albatross would be unlucky, were material enough for Coleridge to work upon to form one of the most wonderful poems in the language. It is full of imaginative thought, rich in descriptive touches. The becalmed vessel lies :

' As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean."

The beauty of the water-snakes is thus described :

" Blue, glossy green, and velvet black
They coiled and swam ; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire."

Again, we have a picture of the mariner's joy in the revived sounds after the terrible calm :

" A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune."

The moral—love and reverence for all that God has made—is brought out clearly. The spell is broken when the mariner is able to bless the creatures of the ocean :

" A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware."
" He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small,
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

Christabel is a poem of the supernatural also, full of imagination and of beautiful word-paintings such as abound in "The Ancient Mariner." The story and the characters are too indefinite to rouse any interest, and the work is quite unfinished.

Kubla Khan is also a fragment, very beautiful as far as its language and rhythm go.

Southey, whose name is always associated with those of Wordsworth and Coleridge, was born at Bristol, educated at Westminster and Oxford. He was very enthusiastic for the cause of the French Revolution, and in 1794 produced *Wat Tyler*, a dramatic poem of revolutionary tendencies. He joined with Coleridge and Lovell in the Pantisocracy scheme, but he soon outlived his rather visionary projects, and became in a few years' time a staunch Tory. In 1796 he wrote an epic poem, *Joan of Arc*, and in 1797 published a series of letters describing life in Spain and Portugal, countries which he had visited the preceding year.

Southey settled at Greta Hall, Keswick, in 1801, and, except for short intervals, one of which was spent at Dublin as secretary to the Chancellor of Ireland, he made Keswick his home for the rest of his life. Southey, unlike Coleridge, was a most industrious writer; his kindness and generosity were unbounded, and for some time he maintained the three children of Coleridge as well as his own. In 1813 he was chosen Poet Laureate. His wife dying in 1834, he married two years later Caroline Bowles, the poetess. He died in 1843, and was buried in Crosthwaite Churchyard.

Southey's chief poems are *Thalaba* (1803), *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), *Roderick, the Last of the Goths* (1814), and *The Vision of Judgment* (1814). His prose works were *The Life of Nelson*, which is an excellent biography written in the best English; and the *Book of the Church*, a warm defence of the Church of England. When Southey was quite young he formed a plan in his own mind for writing a poem on each of the great mythologies of the world: "*Thalaba*" was founded on the Mohammedan, and "*The Curse of Kehama*" on the Hindu. They are wild, improbable stories, possessing a great fascination for those who love the tale of adventure garnished with a strong spice of the supernatural. Southey thought it suitable to the

subject of "Thalaba" to employ a wild, irregular metre of his own designing. "Roderick" is a story of Spanish history ; it possesses much more human interest. Roderick, the last Christian King expelled by the Moors, lives for years a hermit's life ; a vision urges him to rescue his people from the enemy. He goes back, still disguised, to stir them up against their conquerors, is successful in raising a force, and is revealed to them at the hour of victory, only to again disappear from their sight. Of Southey's *occasional* poems written as Poet Laureate, the finest is that on the "Death of the Princess Charlotte"; and of his other minor poems, "The Holly-Tree" is very justly one of the most admired.

A kind and genial friend to all learned men, although not a great poet himself, was *Samuel Rogers*. He was a highly refined and cultivated man who had all his life long had time to study, and means to indulge his artistic and literary tastes. He was a careful and somewhat ponderous writer, and he was specially happy in conversation, many of his pithy sayings passing into general circulation. His chief poems were *The Pleasures of Memory* (1792), *Columbus* (1812), and *Italy* (1822).

One of the most popular poets of the early part of the century was *Thomas Campbell*. He was born in Glasgow, educated at the grammar-school there, and put into the office of a relative, Alexander Campbell, to study law. But this was very uncongenial to the young poet, and he soon gave up law study. He got some employment in private tuition, and spent his leisure time on his poetry. In 1799, when only one-and-twenty, he published *The Pleasures of Hope*, which brought him immediate fame. The next year he visited Germany, at a time when Europe was distracted with the Napoleonic wars. Some of his fine war-songs were no doubt inspired by scenes witnessed at this time. In 1802 Campbell married and settled down near London. The honour of being Lord Rector of Glasgow University was conferred upon him in 1807. On the death of his wife, in 1828, he travelled in France and Algiers,

and published *Letters from the South* describing his tour. In 1842 he went to live at Boulogne with his niece, and died there two years later, but was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Campbell was an industrious writer; he contributed regularly to the leading papers and magazines of his day. His chief works are *The Pleasures of Hope* (1799), *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809), *Specimens of the British Poets* (1818), and *Theodoric* (1824).

"The Pleasures of Hope" is a poem of moral reflection, dwelling on the value of hope, its work in consoling, inspiring, and enriching the life of man. "Gertrude of Wyoming" is a story of life in New England. It commemorates the cruel devastation of Wyoming, a colony in Pennsylvania, by the attack of a tribe of American Indians.

Campbell is, however, best known and appreciated for his patriotic songs. Specially noted for the fine swing of their verse and the vigour of their expression are *The Battle of the Baltic*, *Ye Mariners of England*, and *Hohenlinden*. The *Irish Harper* and *Lord Ullin's Daughter* are good examples of the pathetic ballad, while *The Rainbow* is a fine specimen of his descriptive power.

Thomas Moore, an Irish poet, spent a good deal of his life in London, where he was a great favourite in social life. He was very musical, and set his own verses to music.

Moore, 1779-1852. In his *Irish Melodies* (1807) Moore was at his best. He loved Ireland, and understood Irish

humour well. Many of these poems are patriotic, and deal with the struggle between the English and Irish which found vent in the rebellion of 1798. Some of the finest of the melodies are *The Harp that once through Tara's Halls*, *Dear Harp of my Country*, *The Minstrel Boy*, and *The Last Rose of Summer*.

Moore was a very prolific writer both in prose and poetry. His humour was shown in *The Fudge Family in Paris and in England*, his biographical power in the *Lives of Byron* and of *Sheridan*. Some of his sacred poems also are well known.

Sound the Loud Timbrel has always been a great favourite among these.

Lalla Rookh, the longest of his poems, is a series of Oriental tales. *Lalla Rookh*, the daughter of an Eastern Sovereign, is taken a long journey to be married to a Prince whom she has never seen. He, under the guise of a minstrel, joins her suite on the way and gains her love. To beguile the journey tales are told, and thus the various stories are introduced. "Paradise and the Peri" is the most interesting of these. The Peri, shut out from heaven, is promised readmission if he can present something really acceptable to God. He brings the prayer of innocence and the kiss of self-sacrifice, but it is the tear from the repentant sinner's cheek which at length opens heaven's portals for him.

A group of younger men, sometimes known as the "post-Revolution poets," mark a somewhat later stage of the naturalistic school. The great representative of this

group is *Byron*. Born in 1788, when the air was full of revolution and wild desire for liberty, *Byron* seems from the first to have drunk in of the revolutionary spirit, and none

of the later excesses of the movement in France, which turned Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey into Tories firmly opposed to any changes in government, could estrange *Byron* from the cause. The events of his life helped to confirm him in his revolt against authority. His father, Captain Gordon, died when he was three years old, and his mother, a passionate, haughty woman, alternately petted and rated at her little son. Both parents were Scotch, and *Byron's* life up to the age of ten was spent in Aberdeen. He then succeeded to the title and property of his great-uncle, known as the "mad Lord *Byron*," from his passionate temper. Newstead Abbey, on the borders of Sherwood Forest, was the family seat, and there *Byron* went with his mother in 1798. He was a remarkably pretty child; his only physical defect, of which he was painfully conscious all his life, was a twisted foot. Newstead Abbey was in bad repair, and during *Byron's* school-days it

was shut up. Harrow was chosen, when he was old enough for a public school, and from thence he passed to Trinity College, Cambridge.

Before this final step he had formed an enthusiastic attachment to Mary Chaworth, the daughter of a squire living near Newstead. This boyish adoration he commemorated long afterwards, in his poem "The Dream," when the lady had married another. His career at Cambridge was not a very creditable one, as he threw himself into all the dissipation possible.

One firm friendship he made, however, with John Hobhouse, afterwards Lord Broughton, and this was of value to him all his life. In 1807 he published a collection of his juvenile poems, and called it *Hours of Idleness*. It was to a great extent autobiographical, recording experiences and feelings of his youth. The poems were certainly promising work for a boy barely nineteen, but the volume was severely and unjustly criticised in the January number of the *Edinburgh Review*. Bitterly stung by the words of the criticism, Byron retaliated in 1809 with his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, a satire on all literary men who might possibly have sympathized with the attack on his fame. Byron's satire met with marked success, and his name became famous.

The same year he started with Hobhouse for a two years' sojourn on the Continent. He visited Spain and Portugal, Malta, Albania, and Greece. On his journey he composed the two first cantos of *Childe Harold*, which gives a poetical version of his wanderings. He did not publish it until 1812, and then with reluctance; but it was received with a burst of enthusiasm, and for a time he became the idol of London society. Scott, forgetful of the fact that Byron had so lately attacked him in his satire by name—

"And think'st thou, Scott! by vain conceit, perchance,
On public taste to foist thy stale romance"

—expressed himself in the warmest admiration of Byron's work. The society of the day was corrupt, and brought out some of

Byron's worst qualities, feeding his vanity with incessant and unqualified admiration.

Between the years 1812 and 1815 he composed a series of poetical Eastern tales, all of which were well received. These were *The Giaour* (1813), *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair* (1814). The scene in these poems is laid in Greece, Turkey, or the isles of the Mediterranean, and the hero in each case is a desperate, passionate man, with generous qualities distorted by passion, a misanthropist at war with himself and all mankind, and in this being we feel Byron is drawing his own picture as he believed others to see it. In 1815 he had been introduced to Scott, and the two poets, who warmly admired one another's genius, were mutually attracted. The same year Byron married Isabella Millbank, a handsome and accomplished woman; but the marriage was an unhappy one, and soon after the birth of a daughter Lady Byron left her husband for ever. How far the fault was really Byron's is doubtful, but his enemies took the opportunity to attack him cruelly, and in the April of 1816 Byron left England, bitterly incensed with the treatment he had received. "I felt," he said, "that if what men said of me was true, I was unfit for England; if it was false, England was unfit for me."

Byron tried distraction from foreign travel. He visited Brussels, Waterloo, and then went down the Rhine to Switzerland, and stayed for some months at Geneva, near Shelley. Here was written Canto III. of "*Childe Harold*," describing his late tour. In the autumn of 1816 he went on with Hobhouse to Italy, visiting most towns of historic interest.

This Italian tour is the subject of Canto IV. of "*Childe Harold*." The *Prisoner of Chillon* was produced the same year, and during his stay of seven years in Italy he wrote two short dramas, *Manfred* and *Cain*, and in 1819 *Don Juan*, his last long poem, a mock-heroic, in which his cynical spirit showed itself at its worst.

Byron was deeply interested in the political condition of Italy, split up at that time into little States, and he longed to see Italy united and free. The Greek War of Independence,

which began in 1821, diverted his thoughts from Italy and roused his warmest sympathies. He had always been attracted to the East from his earliest childhood, and nearly all his poems have an Eastern setting. He determined to throw in his lot with the Greeks. He was given the command of an expedition against the Turks at Lepanto. Responsibility brought forth qualities hitherto unsuspected in Byron—calmness, self-control, and self-forgetfulness in the cause of duty. The place of his encampment was unhealthy; he contracted rheumatic fever, and died from its effects in April, 1824. He was deeply lamented in Greece and in England, and it has always been felt that the heroism of his last days atoned for much of the past.

Byron admired the poetry of Pope, and wrote his "English Bards," etc., in the heroic couplet. In reality, however, he

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of his
Poetry.

belonged to the modern school of poetry, for his was not the nature to be bound by rigid laws. He has an extensive vocabulary and a clear mode of expression. Force and tenderness are marked characteristics. In his descriptions of Nature he "painted with a large brush"; he gives us the general features of a scene, and no minute details. In spirit his poetry is the outcome of the French Revolution; and though he sometimes spoke and acted as the most exclusive of aristocrats, in his *writings* he is always the apostle of freedom, equality, and fraternity. Some of his finest passages are those in which he laments the loss of liberty by the Greeks, "He that hath bent him o'er the dead," and, again, "The Isles of Greece." Byron was well versed in the Bible. His *Hebrew Melodies*, published in 1815, show an intimate knowledge of Bible history and understanding of the spirit of the Old Testament Scriptures.

In "Childe Harold" Byron employs a difficult metre, the Spenserian stanza, and succeeds very well with it. He adds to the force of his expression by the use of alliteration, and he skilfully adapts sound to sense.

"The day drags through, though storms keep out the sun,"

represents admirably the weary hours of suspense; whilst rapid, forward motion is well shown in

“ He rushed into the field, and foremost fighting fell.”

Byron was an extremely rapid writer; he cared little for artistic form, and his ear was not infallible, hence it follows that among passages of harmony and grace we continually find others slovenly in construction and unmelodious. Byron has always been the poet most admired on the Continent. His verse is easily translated, and his warm advocacy of revolutionary principles gained him more hearers in countries where the loss of political freedom was more keenly felt than in his own land.

Closely connected with Byron in life and opinion, but very different in character as man and poet, was *Percy Bysshe Shelley*.

Shelley,
1792-1822. He was the son of Sir Timothy Shelley, a matter-of-fact Sussex squire, who never pretended to understand his gifted and highly imaginative son. He went to a private school, and then to Eton, at that time under the iron rule of Dr. Keate. From the first Shelley showed that hatred of oppression and passionate love of independence which characterized him throughout life. At Eton the system of fagging and of compulsory games seemed to him a tyranny, and his opposition to both often brought him into trouble.

In 1810 he went to University College, Oxford. The acquisition of knowledge was a passion with him, but he was impatient of following the beaten track, and again found himself in opposition to authority. The boy was imbued with a strong love of humanity, and a longing to work for its service, but his zeal needed guidance, and the Oxford authorities looked on him as a self-willed and dangerous revolutionist. When he produced a pamphlet on atheism, the Fellows sat in judgment on him, and expelled him without hearing his own defence. Bitterly indignant, and driven from home by his father's wrath, Shelley betook himself to London, where his only consolation was to visit his younger

sisters, who were at school at Clapham. He here made the acquaintance of a school-girl called Harriet Westbrook, and, soon idealizing her, imagined her the victim of unkindness at home and oppression at school. A runaway match was the result, and the young couple were married in Scotland. Sir Timothy threatened disinheritance, and refused to see his son, and Shelley and his wife settled down in Edinburgh. The marriage was not a happy one—probably Shelley had never cared deeply; when his affections were really attracted by Mary Godwin, he left his wife altogether, and two years later (1816) she died by her own hand. Shelley married Mary Godwin, and, after a short sojourn abroad, they settled down near Ascot. This incident in Shelley's life shows him at his worst. His ill-considered marriage would almost inevitably have been followed by disenchantment and unhappiness, but nothing can excuse his heartless desertion of his wife.

A great part of the rest of his life was spent abroad. In 1816 Byron visited him when he was living on the shores of the Lake of Geneva, and the two were mutually attracted. Shelley's was the nobler nature and the finer genius, and Byron shows distinctly the influence of Shelley in some of the poetry written during his long stay at Lausanne. After a short visit to England, Shelley went to Italy, in 1819, for his health, and never revisited his own land. He visited Venice, where he again met Byron, and then we find him at Rome, Naples, Leghorn, Florence, and Pisa, spending some months at each place. In the April of 1822 he settled down on the shores of the Gulf of Spezzia, partly to enjoy some yachting, an amusement to which he was much devoted. On July 8 of the same year he started to sail to Leghorn, a terrible storm overtook the boat, and all perished. Shelley's body was washed ashore a few days later, was cremated in the presence of Byron and Leigh Hunt, and the ashes were buried at Rome. Shelley had, like Byron, become an outcast to his own land. He had been called an atheist, blamed for opinions uttered when he was still a child, condemned unconditionally for the unhappy end of his married

life, and deprived of the guardianship of his children; and when we consider his youth and his strangely unbalanced nature, he was a man "more sinned against than sinning."

As a poet Shelley is a pure idealist. No one reads his poetry for the interest of the subject, or for the worth of the opinions expressed, but for the pure beauty of the poetry itself, for the harmony of its metre and the perfection of its diction. His eager, impulsive nature sometimes led to the production of hurried, unfinished work, but never work that was really poor and mean. He had a great enthusiasm for liberty, and if he sometimes mistook for it *license*, and blamed social and political institutions for the sins of civilization, when he should rather have attributed them to the *abuse* of these institutions, yet his ideals were always noble and good. His quarrel with society was not, as in Byron's case, a personal matter, springing chiefly from the mistaken treatment he had received at its hands; it sprang from a deep sympathy with mankind, and a horror at the oppression under which he imagined all men to lie enslaved.

Shelley's chief poems are: *Queen Mab*, a revolutionary poem, written in 1813. It was full of poetic feeling, but its

arguments are crude and unconvincing. *Alastor* (1816) was a poem of more power. *Prometheus Unbound* (1819), a dramatic poem, dealt with

the classical story of Prometheus, the benefactor of mankind, chained by the arbitrary power of Jupiter. Humanity fettered by the chains of law is typified in the story. The unpractical nature of Shelley's theories is apparent from the fact that when Prometheus is released he has no great project to carry out for the benefit of man. *The Cenci*, another dramatic poem, followed in 1820. A much finer poem is *Adonais*, an elegy on the death of Keats, fit to rank with "Lycidas."

Shelley believed as firmly as Wordsworth that Nature is alive, and that the poet is brought into specially close communion with her. The following beautiful stanza, difficult to select where all are so beautiful, brings out the poet's aspect of Nature:

“ He is made one with Nature ; there is heard
 His voice in all her music, from the moan
 Of thunder to the song of night’s sweet bird ;
 He is a presence to be felt and known
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
 Spreading itself where’er that Power may move,
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own ;
 Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.”

Shelley excels above all in his lyrics. The *Ode to the West Wind*, *The Cloud*, *The Sensitive Plant*, *Arethusa*, and *The Skylark*, are all beautiful of their kind, rich in imaginative thought, musical in their harmony. Such stanzas as these from “The Skylark” could hardly be surpassed.

His Lyric
 Power.

“ Like a poet hidden
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.

* * * * *

“ Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flower,
 All that ever was
 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.”

John Keats, the object of Shelley’s warm appreciation, was the son of a London livery-stable-owner. He was sent to a

Keats,
 1796-1821.

good school at Enfield, and formed a warm friendship with the son of his schoolmaster, Charles Cowden-Clarke, afterwards renowned as a Shakespeare student and commentator. Keats published a volume of juvenile poems in 1817, and *Endymion* in 1818. This last poem was received with a very severe criticism in the *Quarterly Review*. This had a cruel effect on Keats’ health and spirits, though, as far as his work was concerned, he profited by its strictures. *Hyperion* was published in 1820, and well criticised by the *Edinburgh Review*. Keats was then very ill, having developed consumption, a disease which had already

ravaged his family. He went to Italy in 1821, in hopes of improvement, but died at Rome a few weeks after his arrival there. Keats was essentially the poet of beauty ; the faults to be found in his poems were those of youth.

Greek literature and thought had a strong influence on Keats ; thus, his two most ambitious poems, "Endymion" and "Hyperion," are founded on stories taken from Greek mythology, and are imbued with the true Greek spirit. Yet Keats had never learnt the Greek language, and was indebted to Chapman for his knowledge of Homer, his earliest poem being a sonnet in which he recorded his enthusiasm "on first looking into Chapman's Homer." His enthusiasm for beauty, for happiness, love, and youth, all that constituted *beauty* for him, is expressed again and again :

" A thing of beauty is a joy for ever,
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness, but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep

Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing."

Endymion.

Among English poets Keats took Spenser as his model ; indeed, there was a strong similitude between the two poets. Keats was quite one with the "naturalistic" school in his warm admiration of the Elizabethan poets, and he owes to their inspiration the vigour and force which redeem his verse from a certain soft languor which is apt to pervade his poems.

As usual, the new spirit in literature had shown itself *first* in poetry, but prose was not slow to catch the infection.

Sir Walter Scott did more to attract people in general to the romantic movement, both by his poetry and his prose, than any writer of the school. Wordsworth and Coleridge were too philosophical for the many ; Shelley and Keats were essentially the poets' poets ; but Scott, with his kindly personality, his vivid imagination, and clear, vigorous mode of expression, was read and admired by all.

The Scotts came of a clan famous for its manly vigour and

prowess in war. The father of the poet was an Edinburgh

Scott,
1771-1832.

Writer of the Signet, from whom he inherited methodical habits and a somewhat legal turn of mind, which helped to counterbalance the boy's strong leaning towards the romantic. A fever contracted in infancy had left him lame, but had no effect, as with Byron, in making him morbid. He was sent for the first few years of his life to his grandfather's farm to grow strong, and there his observing powers, his love of animals and of country life, were called forth. He gathered, too, many country legends and Border romances as he grew older, for he returned continually to the same neighbourhood in holiday time. He was educated at the Edinburgh High School and University. In 1792 he became an advocate, and five years later married. His first work, a collection of romantic Border tales, *Border Minstrelsy*, appeared in 1802. In 1805 he wrote the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, in 1808 *Marmion*, and in 1810 *The Lady of the Lake*. Any one of these alone would have been sufficient to make his

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fame. Campbell described the chief characteristic of these poems to be a "strong, pithy eloquence." Certainly Scott knew how to tell a tale excellently in verse, and the metre which he employed—the short, ringing, four-foot line—was so well adapted for its purpose that it has since become *par excellence*, the metre for narrative poems. In describing scenery, he gives us what he loves best, not the cultivated, garden-like country around Edinburgh itself, but the "honest gray hills and heather moors," without which he felt he could not live.

His plots and romantic situations are very simple, his heroes hardy, manly, out-spoken beings, with no subtlety of character to puzzle us. "*Marmion*" is his nearest approach to the mysterious Byronic hero, which was soon to become so popular a character. Byron himself well describes this type of character as "not quite a felon, yet but half a knight!"

Rokeby and *The Lord of the Isles* followed in 1813 and 1814, but they were inferior to the first three, and showed signs of exhaustion in the poet. "*Rokeby*" is a tale of the period of

the Civil War in England, and the scene is laid in Yorkshire. In the "Lord of the Isles" we go back to the days of Bruce and Bannockburn, and have some fine descriptions of the scenery of the Western Highlands. Scott himself recognised that his poetical vein was exhausted, and that there was a decline in public interest in his work, and, with his usual sound good sense and healthy philosophy, he turned his mind to a form of literature in which he certainly has found no rival—romantic prose fiction. By this time he had established himself on the banks of the Tweed, where he had bought a small estate and built a substantial mansion, the immortal Abbotsford. Here he entertained with a princely hospitality his personal friends, literary men, distinguished strangers who visited Scotland, and Lockhart, his son-in-law, has given us in his biography a charming picture of these years of leisure and prosperity.

In the summer of 1814 *Waverley*, the novel which was to give its name to the famous series, was published, and then in rapid succession for the next seventeen years were poured forth these marvellous tales which held English readers spell-bound, and the fame and power of which has extended

**Waverley
Novels,
1814-1831.** far beyond England. The literary activity which could accomplish such a work remains a marvel even in these days of rapid production. The books created an immense sensation; we hear of readers sitting up all night over a new volume, and besieging the booksellers with inquiries as to the author, whose identity was long preserved a secret. The "Wizard of the North" truly enchanted his age.

The "Waverley Novels" cover a wide range of subjects. In English history we have representative tales of the Crusade, Earlier Tudor, Elizabethan, Stuart, Jacobite periods; tales of foreign history in "Quentin Durward" and "Anne of Geierstein." Scott excelled in national portraits; Bailie Nicol Jarvie, Dandie Dinmont, Lady Margaret Bellenden, Caleb Balderstone, Dominie Sampson, are quite inimitable. Scott never drew a complex, subtle character, but he gives us many

good specimens of ordinary humanity ; and if occasionally his heroes are too ideally perfect and unimpeachable, and his villains too unconditionally vicious, he has also drawn some characters which impress us as noble and lifelike also. Such are the heroic Jeanie Deans, who ventures all to save her sister, and Di Vernon, brave as a man, but always thoroughly womanly at heart.

In his treatment of history, Scott, like Shakespeare, often disregards accuracy of detail, but he always succeeds in giving a good general picture of the period he has chosen. He has the dramatic faculty of seizing just the right incidents to throw up in bold relief his characters.

On the accession of George IV. Scott was offered a baronetcy. Five years later began a period of adversity for the poet. It was a time of great financial crisis, and Scott had continually lived ahead of his income, his publishers, Constable and Ballantyne, advancing him money for books which he had promised to supply. He had always lived on a generous scale, spending a good deal on hospitality and on improving his small estate, so that when his publishers failed Scott found himself liable for £117,000. He would not accept bankruptcy, but nobly determined to pay off his debts by his own earnings. His wife dying soon after, Scott let Abbotsford, and went into lodgings in Edinburgh, where he worked day and night to redeem his honour. For five years this splendid struggle was carried on, and a series of novels produced with marvellous rapidity, and midst ever-increasing decay of mental and bodily power. *Woodstock*, the first of this series, though on a subject in which Scott, with his strong Tory bias, did not excel—the Cavaliers and Roundheads—showed no diminution of power, but as time went on a certain loss of brightness and freshness made itself plainly visible. In 1830 his overworked brain succumbed to a stroke of paralysis. On his partial recovery he insisted on resuming work, and two novels, *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*, were actually produced by him after this serious illness. At last he was obliged to relax his efforts, but the

goal was won. Abbotsford was freed from debt and restored to his posterity, and, after a short visit to Italy in search of health, the poet was brought back to Abbotsford to die with the sound of the Tweed, which he loved so well, in his ears.

Scott's contemporary popularity was immense, and his influence on the subsequent history of romantic fiction was great; but the novel, as we understand it now, apart from the historical romance or the romance of terror, borrowed comparatively little from Scott. The typical nineteenth-century novel, the most original and characteristic production of the age, depends for its influence on the true portrayal of contemporary life and character. Reality in the characters drawn, probability in the circumstances of the plot, take the place of the unreality of the romantic setting which is yet so charming to many minds. This romantic setting is never wanting to Scott, and, striking as his characters are in their lifelike variety and truth, the circumstances in which they are placed are never such as commend themselves to ordinary experience. "The Antiquary," perhaps, approaches most nearly to the novel of everyday life, but even in this case the plot is intricate and improbable.

The novel of contemporary life, which has for its ancestor the work of Fielding, began with a group of women writers.

Fanny Burney, the first of these, was the daughter of Dr. Burney, a musician, and at the time of his daughter's birth organist of Lynn parish church. When the child was eight her father moved to London, where he soon became well known and entertained many distinguished people. Fanny grew

Miss
Burney,
1752-1840.

up a shy, awkward girl, who loved to keep in the background, but all the time she was busy observing her father's guests, and many of them reappeared in her works. Dr. Johnson took notice of her, and often tried to draw her out from her shy reserve. In 1778, after she had been secretly writing for months, Fanny Burney ventured to offer a publisher her first novel, *Evelina, or a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*. This

first attempt was a great success. It was warmly praised by Reynolds, Burke, and Sheridan, and Dr. Johnson sat up all night to read the production of his "little Burney." In 1782 *Cecilia* was published, and three years later Miss Burney was appointed one of the lady Keepers of the Robes to Queen Charlotte. At Court she spent five weary, monotonous years, with no time for reading or writing, kept practically a close prisoner, and occupied in mixing snuff and other small waiting-maid offices. Her health suffered from the confinement, and she at length was allowed to resign, and was given a small pension. After travelling about for her health, Miss Burney settled at Mickleham, where she was thrown into the society of many French *émigré* families.

General d'Arblay, a soldier and scholar, won her affections, and they married in 1793. They were both poor; the husband taught French, and the wife wrote books for a livelihood. In 1796 her next novel, *Camilla*, was published, and in 1814 *The Wanderer*, in 1832 *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*. She died in 1840, in her eighty-eighth year, and two years later her interesting "Diary and Letters" were published. "Evelina," Miss Burney's first novel, is also her best. It has many of the faults of youthful work, the plot is forced and improbable, and in dealing with character she is inclined to take some particular weakness or eccentricity, and render it too prominent. She shows, however, remarkable powers of observation, a strong sense of humour, and some power of pathos. Miss Burney's style is at its best in her early productions. "Evelina" and the early letters published with her "Diary" are simple, clear English, but "Cecilia" is written in a pompous, involved style, which would lead one to suppose that it may have been produced under the direct supervision of Dr. Johnson.

Maria Edgeworth, the next of this series of lady novelists, was the daughter of an Irish country gentleman, who was himself a literary man of a very original character. Maria was his eldest daughter, and he kept her busily employed as steward and secretary in the affairs of his estate, Edgeworths-

Miss Edge-
worth,
1765-1849.

town, where the family went in 1782. It was not until she was thirty-three that she produced any original work. She had great sympathy with child-life, and decided views on the subject of the training and education of children, and these opinions were expressed in a series of collected tales. *The Parents' Assistant*, *Moral Tales*, *Popular Tales*, *Tales of Fashionable Life*, all deal with the various circumstances of child-life, and the dangers and temptations to which it is liable. Her more ambitious novels are studies of Irish life and character. *Belinda*, *Castle Rackrent*, *The Absentee*, show up the evils of absentee landlords. Her sympathies with the Irish are warm, but just and discriminating; she advocates their cause with vigour but also with sound good sense and judgment. Her pictures, we feel, are true to life, and her sense of humour is delightful.

Jane Austen was the daughter of an English clergyman. She lived a quiet, uneventful life, and was well fitted to be the

Miss
Austen,
1775-1817.

novelist of the "commonplace." She began to write when she was quite a girl, but it was many years before she could find a publisher bold enough to take her works. Many recognised their worth, but none would take the risk of putting before the public such ordinary themes of everyday life. At last the novels appeared in quick succession between the years 1811 and 1818—*Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Persuasion*, and *Northanger Abbey*. They were thus contemporary with many of the "Waverley Novels," but they seem infinitely more modern, because Miss Austen describes the England of her own day only. She never goes beyond her own experience: part of her life was spent in Bath, and we have pictures of the gossiping, fashionable society of the watering-place of her day; her Hampshire village home, Steventon, where the first twenty-five years of her life was passed, appears, no doubt, in many of the village homes of her heroines; Lyme Regis is faithfully described in "Persuasion." Scenery, for its own sake, seems to have little effect on her mind, and is rarely described. She had a horror of false sentiment, and never harrows our feelings with

pathetic descriptions of the sufferings of her characters. She always takes care to show us that they have brought their troubles upon themselves, and are not to be regarded in a spirit of morbid sentimentality.

Miss Austen is full of penetration : her pictures of character show remarkable powers of observation, and a quiet but ever-present humour pervades her work. Her satire is never bitter, but it has a quiet force which impresses our memory, when bitter sarcasm would fail to do so, and she often seems to be quietly laughing with us at her own creations. Miss Austen's style is distinguished for its ease and fluency. As she abhorred sentiment in the tone of her novels, so she carefully avoided the "flowers of speech"; she does not appeal to the picturesque or imaginative in us, but the simple directness of her style harmonizes admirably with her subject-matter.

Scott was one of the first to discover the high merit in Miss Austen's work; he also gave generous praise to an authoress who has often been classed with her and with Miss Edgeworth as their Scotch counterpart.

Miss Ferrier (1782-1854) only produced three novels—*Marriage*, *The Inheritance*, and *Destiny*. They were the works of a woman of keen observation, and contained some excellent sketches of contemporary life. Unlike Miss Austen, she is emotional and indulges freely in sentiment. Her satire is clever, but less delicately veiled than that of Miss Austen.

Hannah More (1745-1833), as an authoress, falls far below the standard of such writers as Miss Edgeworth and Miss Austen; but, still, she did a good work in her day by the indefatigable manner in which she used her pen in the support of all kinds of philanthropic reform. In addition to her pamphlets, which are too numerous to name, she wrote some tales—*Florio*, *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*, and *Cælebs in Search of a Wife*—and a few plays. All her work is characterized by good sense and sound judgment, and her advice on such subjects as the abolition of the slave-trade and the education of the poor was sought for eagerly by philanthropists and statesmen.

PERIOD X

EARLY WORKS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY UP TO 1837, AND TENNYSON

Early work of nineteenth century—Modern reviews and their contributors
—Charles Lamb—De Quincey—Carlyle—Tennyson, the representative
poet of the age—Browning and his wife.

THE early years of the nineteenth century were marked by the rapid growth of the periodical, and the work of the early essayists is inseparably connected with one or other of the great magazines which sprang into existence during the first thirty-five years of the century. These periodicals were in the first place organs of literary criticism, and they were also allied to one or other of the great political parties.

Early Work of Nineteenth Century.

The earliest to appear was one of Whig sympathies, *The Edinburgh Review*, begun in 1802 as a quarterly magazine. Its first editor was a Scotch advocate, *Francis Jeffrey*, a man of keen critical faculty and an able writer, whose judgment, however, was often seriously biased by his political leanings. The severe criticism on Lord Byron's first poems was probably the work of Lord Brougham, but it was sanctioned by Jeffreys, who in return was held up to scorn and ridicule in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers":

Great Reviews: *The Edinburgh*.

"Health to immortal Jeffreys! once, in name,
England could boast a judge almost the same.

In soul so like, so merciful and just,
 Some think that Satan has resigned his trust,
 And given the spirit to the world again,
 To sentence letters, as he sentenced men !”

A similar attack on the poet Moore resulted in a duel between the critic and the angry author.

Sydney Smith, well known for his remarkable wit and humour, was associated with Jeffreys in the work of *The Edinburgh Review*, for which he suggested the motto: “We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal !” He was a clever essayist, and contributed many able criticisms on books to the magazine.

In 1809 a serious rival was started in *The Quarterly Review*, a Tory periodical. Its first editor was *William Giffard*, a very severe critic, who, unfortunately, descended to personalities in his attacks, and gained a most unfavourable reputation for himself. He was a clever journalist, however, and his zeal did much to secure a high place for the “Quarterly” among other critical journals. He was succeeded in his editorship by *Lockhart*, who is best remembered by his fine biography of his father-in-law, *Walter Scott*. As a critical writer he was also of the severe type, and some have attributed to him the fierce attack on Keats’ “Endymion.”

Blackwood’s Magazine (1817) was the venture of a Tory Edinburgh publisher, and is still carried on by members of his family. For many years “Maga,” as the Blackwood family fondly called their venture, had the support of a clever essayist, *John Wilson*, who under the name of “Christopher North” poured forth a series of brilliant articles on a great variety of subjects. The magazine did not profess to be only a critical review ; it included articles on subjects of general interest, serial tales, and poems. In its early days, *Lockhart*, before he became editor of the “Quarterly,” contributed to “Blackwood,” and it was this magazine in which “George Eliot’s” earliest fiction, the “Scenes from Clerical Life,” appeared in serial form.

In 1820 appeared *The London Magazine*, a periodical of Whig tendencies. Its contributors were satirized severely in the

The London. Tory papers as the "Cockney School," but included in their number such names as Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Keats, Hartley Coleridge, and Carlyle.

Charles Lamb, whose early work appeared in "The London Magazine," was the son of a London lawyer, and was educated

Lamb,
1775-1834. at Christ's Hospital, where Coleridge was his school-fellow. He loved reading, and especially devoted himself to the literature of the Elizabethan period. When he left school he obtained a clerkship in the offices of the East Indian Company. In 1796 his sister Mary, in a paroxysm of madness, killed her mother. She was committed by the jury, who acquitted her of wilful murder, to an asylum, but on her recovery Lamb determined to devote his life to her, and, by entering into a formal engagement to watch over her and be responsible for her, he induced the law to allow him to take her from the confinement which was preying on her health and spirits. Most nobly did he keep his word, giving up for her sake any thoughts of marriage, and bearing cheerfully the opposition of his brother and other relations, who highly disapproved of the arrangement. He was rewarded by the devotion of his sister and her warm sympathy in his literary work. He gives a charming picture of her in his essay on "Mackery End":

"Her education in youth was not much attended to, and she happily missed all that train of female garniture which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion. I know not whether their chance in wedlock might not be diminished by it, but I *can* answer for it that it makes (if the worst comes to the worst) most incomparable old maids."

Lamb's first published work was some poems contributed to a collection brought out by Coleridge. In 1806 he and his sister produced the "Tales from Shakespeare," and in 1808 "Specimens of Dramatic Authors contemporary with Shakespeare." Between the years 1820 and 1824 his most famous essays, known as the "Essays of Elia" appeared in "The London Magazine."

In 1825 Lamb retired on a pension and went to live at Enfield; in 1833 he moved to Edmonton, and the next year he died. His sister survived him thirteen years.

Lamb was called a "Cockney" writer, and he seems to have borne the implied reproach with equanimity, for, like Dr. Johnson, he loved every stone of London, and would not willingly have exchanged the roar of "Fleet Street" for the most attractive country sights or sounds. With all this, he had the warmest admiration for Wordsworth, the poet of Nature. "The streets of London are his fairy land," writes his contemporary Hazlitt, and in his essays Lamb gives us a series of pictures of London life, its quaint old buildings, its playhouses and actors, its chimney-sweeps and beggars, all rise before us as he writes. That he could appreciate a country holiday occasionally is testified in his description of a summer excursion in his school-days, in "Christ's Hospital," or, again, in later age to "Mackery End" with his sister.

Lamb brought to his work a mind stored with learning. He was not an accurate scholar, his quotations are often faulty, especially from classical literature, but
 Character of Lamb's Work. in English writers, from Spenser to his own time, he was well read. His essays are to a certain extent autobiographical; with a rich, fanciful setting he gives us pictures from his own experience, and more than this, a picture of his own mind. In the *Old Benchers of the Middle Temple* we have scenes of his childhood, the impressions taken in by those observant eyes of his, when, as a child, he wandered about the courts of the Temple, where his father found employment as a confidential clerk to one of the leading barristers; "Christ's Hospital" is a picture

of his school-days, of his friendship with Coleridge, of the hardships and pleasures of school-life. His brother and other members of his family appear in *My Relations*, *Mackery End*, and *Dream Children*.

Lamb's humour, never wanting in insight and sympathy, is his most striking characteristic. It is difficult to select special examples, but perhaps some of the most charming of the purely humorous essays are: *Poor Relations*, *Mrs. Battle on Whist*, *Roast Pig*, and *The Old and New Schoolmaster*. In style Lamb has adopted much from his favourite Elizabethan authors; he has their straightforward simplicity; he has also some of their favourite devices for attracting attention, such as alliteration, the coining of new words, the latinized phrase. He shows skill in adapting his style to his subject, and there is a wonderful originality and freshness in his work which rightly place him in the first rank of our essayists.

As a critic, Lamb concerned himself little with his contemporaries, but his appreciative judgment of the drama of Shakespeare's day has been most valuable as a guide to the study of the Elizabethan dramatists. Lamb was a clear-minded, thoughtful critic, singularly modest in pronouncing opinion in an age when nearly all prose-writers set up for authoritative critics in literary matters.

Another essayist of the "Cockney School" was *William Hazlitt*. He wrote a large number of essays and critical pamphlets, and was somewhat autocratic in his judgments. His *Lectures on Dramatic Elizabethan Literature* is a valuable work of criticism.

Henry Leigh Hunt (1784-1839), of the same school, was a brilliant but rather unstable writer. He was closely connected in literary work with Byron and Shelley, and lived with the former in Italy for some time. Their friendship was broken shortly before Byron's death, and Leigh Hunt published a most unsympathetic sketch of Lord Byron in 1828. He was in style a graceful, easy writer, and has a genuine love for the great English poets.

A greater name is that of *Thomas de Quincey*. He was born

in Manchester, and educated at Manchester Grammar School and at Oxford. He settled at Grasmere in De Quincey, 1809, attracted by the society of Coleridge 1785-1857. and Wordsworth. Between the years 1821 and 1826 he contributed constantly to "The London Magazine"; but from 1826 to his death in 1859 he transferred his allegiance to "Blackwood."

The last thirty years or so of his life were spent near Edinburgh. De Quincey early in his life contracted the habit of eating opium, and this partly accounts for the fact that he brought so few of his projected works to perfection, and also for the inequalities in those which he did complete.

He is best remembered by his *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, a collection of brilliant autobiographical essays, which appeared first in periodical form. De Quincey had a mind stored with learning, and a great power for expressing his thoughts. He grasped very little of the ordinary life which was passing around him, but he can transport us with him into ideal and visionary scenes by the power of his prose-poetry.

His essays on history, literature, and political economy are not valuable as a contribution to the subjects he has chosen, however well written they may be, for he is too apt to neglect any wider views in the pursuit of some one theory which interests him specially for the time being.

One more great name must be mentioned among this group of prose-writers and critics. *Thomas Carlyle*, most of whose work belongs to the Victorian Period, was in Carlyle, 1795-1881. his early literary career associated closely with several of the great periodicals. Son of a

Scotch mason, he was educated at Annan Academy and Edinburgh University. Having refused to become a Presbyterian minister, Carlyle maintained himself for some years by teaching, whilst his leisure time was spent in the study of German and the writing of magazine articles. By his marriage with Miss Jane Welsh in 1826, he was relieved from pressing money anxieties and able to devote himself to his literary work. Until 1834, when they moved to London, the Carlyles

lived at Edinburgh and at Craigenputtock, a farm belonging to Mrs. Carlyle. During this time a *Life of Schiller* was contributed as a serial to "The London Magazine," and *Sartor Resartus* to "Fraser's Magazine," lately started as a sort of offshoot of "Blackwood's." In 1834 the Carlyles settled down at "5, Cheyne Row, Chelsea," and Carlyle soon created a sensation by a course of lectures on *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. These appeared in book form in 1841. In 1837 had appeared his great work on the French Revolution, which stamped him as the most original writer of his age in style and opinion.

Much interested in the Chartist movement, Carlyle condemns modern ideas and methods in *Past and Present*, a contrast between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries. In 1845, in the *Life, Letters, and Speeches of Cromwell*, he deals fully with his favourite hero. *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850) came out in monthly numbers, and contain a bitter condemnation of the social conditions of England in his own day. His last work, *Frederick the Great*, came out in six volumes during the years 1858 to 1865.

In 1866 his own University of Edinburgh elected him Lord Rector, but before he could return from the ceremonies attendant on his inauguration his wife died very suddenly, to his great and lasting grief. He survived her just fifteen years, dying in February, 1881, at Chelsea.

Carlyle was a great prophet and teacher. Apart from the literary interest of each work, there is always deep interest attached to the thought and feeling expressed.

Character of Carlyle's Work.

In "*Sartor Resartus*" man and the conditions of his life are treated as the vestures of the one great reality, God. The "*French Revolution*," perhaps his finest work, is not only a masterly treatment of a difficult historical period, full of the most powerful realism, but also a splendid homily applying the moral of past events to the present, and showing that the inevitable inequality of mankind was never more thoroughly demonstrated by any event than by that mighty Revolution which took as its text "Equality, liberty, and fraternity."

Carlyle's "Cromwell" and "Frederick the Great" were both undertaken with the hope of securing a fair judgment for two characters not justly estimated by the majority of mankind. In spite of both being works of "special pleading," Carlyle's own sincerity and enthusiasm for his subject resulted in gaining for his "heroes" a much fairer hearing.

"Heroes and Hero-worship" is perhaps the work which has been of most universal interest and influence. In six powerful lectures Carlyle treated of the heroic in history. The "hero," or great man, is shown to have played his part in history as a Divinity, a Prophet, Poet, Priest, Man of Letters, and King, and Carlyle shows indeed that "great men taken up in any way are profitable company"; for "we cannot look, however imperfectly, upon a great man without gaining something by him. He is the living light fountain which it is good and pleasant to be near."

Throughout Carlyle's work we see his hatred of insincerity and untruth in any form; his scorn of pleasure as an aim of life: "Love not pleasure; love God." "This is the everlasting Yea . . . wherein whoso walks and works it is well with him"; and, above all, his exaltation of the gospel of labour and duty: "Do the duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a duty; thy second duty will already have become clearer."

Carlyle took little interest in national life; his faith rested in the character and work of individuals. The methods of modern democracy were hateful to him; the few, the true nobility, should lead the masses by a "divine right" of their own.

We have now brought this outline history of English literature up to the dawn of the Victorian period, but any sketch

would be incomplete without some mention
Tennyson, of the representative poet of the nineteenth
 1809-1895. century, and of his greatest contemporary,
Robert Browning.

Alfred Tennyson was born in 1809 at Somersby Rectory, Lincolnshire. He was the third son in a family of twelve.

Both his elder brothers showed some poetical talent, and the poet began at a very early age to display his taste for verse. His first school was the Louth Grammar School. In 1826 Charles and Alfred Tennyson published a volume of their collected poems under the title of *Poems by Two Brothers*, and spent the proceeds on a tour in Lincolnshire. Tennyson was entered at Trinity College, Cambridge (Byron's college), in 1828, and soon became the centre of a cultured literary circle—Trench, Alford, Spedding, Hallam, and others. With Arthur Hallam, son of the historian, he formed the warmest friendship. Hallam became engaged to Tennyson's sister, and for five happy years the closest intercourse was kept up between the two friends. In 1832 Hallam published a volume of poems, which attracted considerable attention. The following year he went abroad for his health, and died very suddenly at Vienna. His loss was felt keenly by Tennyson. For a time all things were dark to him, and even poetry brought no relief. Two collections of short poems had appeared in 1830 and 1838, and when Tennyson went to London in 1834 he was warmly received into the best literary society. His mother (now a widow) had settled at Cheltenham, and between the years 1844 and 1850 Tennyson was a constant visitor at her home, and from there visited the grave of Hallam in the churchyard of Clevedon parish church. "In Memoriam," the noble tribute to his friend's memory, was published in 1850. The same year he married Miss Sellwood, and settled for a time at Twickenham.

In November, 1850, Tennyson was appointed to fill the office of Poet Laureate, vacant by the death of Wordsworth.

The rest of Tennyson's life is singularly uneventful. He was raised to the peerage as Baron of Aldworth and Farringford in 1883, and spent the greater part of his latter years in the Isle of Wight, where he died October 6, 1892.

It has seldom been the fate of any poet to be so appreciated, honoured, and respected in his own lifetime. Nor did Tennyson have the sad but often-repeated experience of outliving his fame. He died an old man, but with unexhausted power,

and nothing of an inferior nature was produced by him. Shelley, Byron, and Keats died young, before they had attained the height of their fame; Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge outlived their poetical prime.

The *Collection of Poems* of 1830 chiefly consists of lyrics, "Mariana," "The Merman," the "Ode to Memory." That of 1832 contained some charming idylls: "The Collected Miller's Daughter," "The May Queen," "The Poems, Lotus-Eaters," "The Brook," "The Palace of Art," 1830, 1832, "The Dream of Fair Women." Many narrative 1842. poems appeared in the collection of 1842: "Dora," "Godiva," "The Lord of Burleigh," and "Locksley Hall."

The Princess was published in 1847, and *Maud* in 1855.

In 1869 appeared *The Idylls of the King*, his dramas *Queen Mary*, *Harold*, and *Becket* in 1875, 1877, and 1884. His latest poems were "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" and "Demeter, and other Poems," published in 1889.

Tennyson was essentially the representative poet of his age. He sympathized with the feeling and thought of his age, and appealed to the men of his own generation without ever degrading the true office of the poet in so doing. In all the difficult questions of the age Tennyson was deeply interested. Though a Liberal in opinion, he was never led into any of the excesses of Republican zeal which had proved so fascinating to Byron and Wordsworth in their youth. The love of order and settled rule, which was one of his strongest characteristics, made him fear the results of unbridled democracy, and while he is always to be found on the side of true liberty, of reforms which favour social equality and justice, he also condemns strongly violent methods and lawless attempts to right even the worst of wrongs. His warm love for England comes out in his often-expressed admiration of her as a nation that possesses still

Representative
Poet.

"Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,
Some patient force to change them when we will,
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd."

And, again, she is the land

“Where freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent.”

Tennyson is not blind to England's faults, nor to the crying need of reform, especially in social life :

“Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth ;
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth ;”

and in *Maud* he denounces the hypocrisy and corruption of a society which had made money its god.

Another question of the day which finds its place among Tennyson's works is the position of woman and her right sphere. In *The Princess* Tennyson shows that woman fails when she works in selfish exclusiveness, that the best work will be done for the world when the man and woman have learnt to reverence each other's powers and unite in the great service of their fellows.

“Then comes the statelier Eden back to men ;
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm ;
Then springs the crowning race of human kind.”

Problems of moral and religious thought are treated in several poems. *The Two Voices* represents a struggle in the mind so conscious of the misery and bitterness of life that it sees no remedy but self-destruction. Slowly but surely the truth is borne in that *death* is no remedy for the ills of existence.

“'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh, life, not death, for which we pant,
More life and fuller that we want.”

A “hidden hope” illuminates all around ; the voice of good cheer declares :

“I see the end and know the good ;”

and the despondent heart learns

“To feel, although no tongue can prove,
That every cloud that spreads above,
And veileth love, itself is love.”

The life of selfish exclusiveness, the worship of beauty and culture for their own sakes, whilst all thoughts of responsibility to one's fellow-men are forgotten is dealt with in *The Palace of Art*, and a life of self-centred asceticism, which despises the duties of everyday life, and has for its aim the saving of the individual soul only, is condemned in *Simon Stylites*.

In his great elegy Tennyson shows his sympathy with the spiritual perplexities of man. *In Memoriam* is a noble tribute

“In Me-
moriam,”
1850.

to his friend Hallam, worthy to complete that trinity of elegiac verse which comprises “*Lycidas*” and “*Adonais*.” But it is more than this, it is a grand Christian sermon on life, although the text may be death. It represents a loving human soul realizing through bitter personal loss something of the stern, relentless order of the universe and the seeming waste and cruelty of death. From the depths of despair, through all the doubts and fears which assail the thoughtful mind brought face to face with the mysteries of life and death, the mourner rises to a calm serenity of resignation, and higher still to the triumphant assurance of hope and faith. All through the varying moods of fear, doubt, and hope expressed in the poem, we feel the true refrain has been :

“ ’Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.”

Bitter sorrow generated the doubt ; doubt has been taken in the humble, questioning spirit of one conscious of his own weakness—

“ An infant crying in the night . . .
And with no language but a cry ;”

and the answer has come with no uncertain voice :

“ No, like a child in doubt and fear :
But that wild clamour made me wise ;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near.”

The prelude, added last of all to the poem, prepares us for what the triumph of love and faith will be :

“Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :
 Thou madest man, he knows not why,
 He thinks he was not made to die ;
 And Thou hast made him : Thou art just.”

“In Memoriam” differs from the two great preceding elegies in the *personality* of the sorrow expressed. In “Lycidas” and “Adonais” it is the poet, the man of thought and character, who is lost to the world ; in Tennyson’s elegy the personal grief is as present as in David’s lament over Jonathan. It is a true hero-worship :

“Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me ;”

and, again,

“Sweet human hand and life and eye ;
 Dear heavenly friend that cannot die.”

“Lycidas” and “Adonais” have been compared to magnificent marble sculptures raised to the memory of the dead friend, “In Memoriam” to the living tree planted by his grave.

The doubts raised by the seeming waste of such noble lives find their place and their answer in Tennyson :

“We pass. The path that each man trod
 Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds ;
 What fame is left for human deeds
 In endless age ? It rests with God ;”

and in Milton :

“Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
 And slits the thin-spun life. ‘But not the praise,’
 Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears ;
 ‘Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
 Nor in the glistening foil
 Set off to th’ world, nor in broad rumour lies ;
 But lives and spreads abroad by those pure eyes,
 And perfect witness of all-judging Jove ;
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
 Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.’”

In each poem the music of the solemn "Dead March"; its alternations of wailing grief and muffled sorrow give way to the triumphant anthem of praise which soars above all:

"No longer half akin to brute,
For all we thought, and loved, and did,
And hoped, and suffered, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit.

"Whereof the man that with me trod
This planet was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God."

And in "Lycidas":

"So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves.

* * * * *

There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes."

The Arthurian romance had a great fascination for Tennyson. As a boy he had read eagerly the adventures of the Knights of the Round Table in Malory. His "Idylls of the King," poems on the subject came out at various times between the years 1859 and 1872. He chose the name "Idylls" for these poems, apparently, in reference to the original use of the word in Greek literature, where it means "a little picture," and is applied to a short picturesque poem describing the life of simple country-folk, such a poem, in short, as his own "Dora." But the "Idylls of the King," whatever may have been Tennyson's intention at first, are much more than this. Taken as a whole, they form a great epic poem which has for its theme the rise and fall of a kingdom based on righteousness. Evil passions and wayward wills are subjugated for a time to the rule of the ideal King, the rule of conscience; but the reaction comes, the natures of "baser mould" revolt against the laws of purity and honour im-

posed upon them, and all ends in ruin, confusion, and *seeming* failure,

“ The realm
Reels back into the beast and is no more.”

But the King himself, after the first disappointment and shattering of hopes, realizes that the failure is indeed but seeming : in God's good time the work will be done, if not by him :

“ The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

* * * * *

I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure !”

The spiritual allegory, Tennyson himself shows us in his epilogue, is the conflict, ever old and ever new, of “ Sense at war with Soul.”

The Idylls, now published as a complete poem, comprise *The Dedication to the Prince Consort*, *The Coming of Arthur*, then ten idylls under the general title of *The Round Table*, *The Passing of Arthur*, and the *Epilogue to the Queen*.

Tennyson has given us three historical plays, “ Queen Marý,” “ Harold,” and “ Becket,” and some lesser dramatic pieces,

“ The Falcon,” “ The Cup,” “ The Promise of
The May,” and “ The Foresters.”

The Dramas.

It has been said that the poet possessed the dramatic instinct, but not the dramatic faculty. Thought and feeling always predominated with him over action ; so that, although some of his best thoughts are to be found in his dramas, the plays themselves cannot be considered the work of a master-hand.

Queen Mary is a somewhat ponderous, lifeless play, but it contains some fine passages, such as the description of the death of Lady Jane Grey by a witness. *Harold* is less ponderous ; there is more characterization and more human interest centred in the story of Harold and Edith. *Becket* is the best of the three historical plays as regards construction. Becket himself is a stately and imposing figure, worthy to rank

with Shakespeare's Wolsey. Of the lesser plays, the best is *The Foresters*, a pastoral play with the life in Sherwood Forest in the days of "Bold Robin Hood" as its theme. The piece is a perfect idyll of its kind, and breathes the pure fresh air of the woodlands.

No poet has ever exercised the difficult office of Poet Laureate with more delicacy and tact, and with less of the

As Poet
Laureate.

spirit of the flatterer, than Tennyson. There is a strong feeling that the bestowal of this mark of honour on a poet will tend to degrade him ; that the mere fact that he is expected to write "to order," as it were, must lead to the production of inferior work. Tennyson has shown us that this need not be the case ; and in times of great calamity or joy men waited with breathless anxiety to hear what Tennyson would say, and his manly, noble utterances never disappointed them. Some of his "occasional" poems rank among the finest things he has given us. *The Prince Consort, Ode to the Duke of Wellington, Welcome to Alexandra, Charge of the Light Brigade*, mark him as no unworthy successor of "him that uttered nothing base."

Not only is Tennyson the representative of his age : he is a great artist for all time. First and foremost among the elements of his artistic power is his keen and loving observation of Nature. For minute details of natural scenery vividly depicted Tennyson is unrivalled. Hair is described as

As an
Artist.

"More black than ash-buds in the front of March,"

and again as

"In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within."

Of trees we have—

"A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade ;
The twinkling laurel scattered silver lights."

"Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarlèd bark."

The olive is

“prodigal in oil
And hoary to the wind.”

Such poems as “The Brook,” “The Gardener’s Daughter,” “Mariana,” “The Miller’s Daughter,” are full of charming pictures of Nature, and scattered throughout all the poems are lines which, by the exactness of the epithet used, show the closeness of the poet’s observation of Nature.

“The ruby-budded lime,” the “perky larch,” the “milky cones” of the chestnut, the “scarlet shafts of sunrise,” the “thick-moted sunbeam”—these are only a few examples of this wonderful gift of appropriate expression.

Tennyson was also a student of books. There is evidence throughout his work of wide reading, not only of his great predecessors in English literature, but of the great foreign classics, ancient and modern.

Pathos, not unmixed sometimes with quiet humour, appears in such poems as “The Grandmother,” “The Northern Farmer,” “The May Queen,” “Rizpah.”

Tennyson is a master of style, language, and versification. In the construction of his poems there is a sense of majestic

Style, Metre.	order and gradual development ; in his versification there is a sense of music and harmonious rhythm ; in his diction there is an instinct for
------------------	--

the right word, whose sound will help the thought, and these things combine to make him almost perfect in his art.

It is this wonderful sense of melody which makes his lyrics so charming. He is, indeed, the poet of whom Sidney speaks in his “Defence of Poesie”: “He commeth unto you with words sent in delightful proportion, either accompanied with or prepared for the well enchaunting skill of musick.” Examples of this melodious diction combined with the wisest use of alliteration are abundant :

“The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

* * * * *

I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.”

"The lotus blooms below the barren peak,
 The lotus blows by every winding creek.
 All day the wind breathes low with mellow tone
 Through every hollow cave and alley lone."

Among his most musical lyrics are: "The splendour falls on castle wall," "Home they brought her warrior, dead," "Break, break," "Come into the garden, Maud."

Robert Browning, Tennyson's rival in the estimation of the intellectual world, but never so in the affections of ordinary readers, stands forth as undoubtedly the most Browning, original poet of the Victorian Age.
 1812-1889.

Younger than Tennyson, and with a genius which matured more slowly, he did not in any sense dominate (as the elder poet did) the spirit of the modern era of poetry. His life was a singularly uneventful one. His home was cultured, his circumstances prosperous; he had always leisure for deep reading and research, both in England and on the Continent. In 1846 he married Elizabeth Barrett, already known as a poetess, and their married life (1846-1861) was spent almost entirely in Italy. Browning survived his wife, to whom he was passionately attached, twenty-eight years, dying at Venice in 1889.

Browning was a voluminous writer. We can mention only the chief of his long poems: *Pauline*, 1833; *Paracelsus*, 1835; *Sordello*, 1840; *The Ring and the Book*, 1869. Three notable collections appeared as *Bells and Pomegranates*, 1841-1844; *Men and Women*, 1855; *Dramatis Personæ*, 1864. In these are to be found such noble poems as *Saul*, *The Bishop's Tomb at St. Praxed's*, *The Lost Leader*, *Abt Vogler*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

Browning excels in the study of complex human character, especially in such poems as *Paracelsus*, *The Ring and the Book*. He shows dramatic power in *Strafford*, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, and many dramatic monologues. In *Christmas Day*, *Easter Eve*, *Saul*, he meets some of the religious problems of the age in a spirit of fervent faith and hope. The lyrics interspersed throughout his works are most beautiful. *Home*

Thoughts from Abroad and many of the songs in *Pippa Passes* are good examples of his lyrical power.

Browning was as indifferent to outward form and musical rhythm as Tennyson was carefully observant of both. Yet his poems abound in noble passages of real beauty, not only of thought, but of expression, which make us forget the obscurity and harshness of much of his work. Above all, he is a great philosophical teacher, and as such has left a strong impress upon the world of thought.

His gifted wife, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (1806-1861), with her intense sympathy with suffering and ardent love of justice, has given us some noble poems in *Aurora Leigh*, *Cowper's Grave*, *The Cry of the Children*, *The Vision of the Poets*, *Mountain Blossoms*. She is also indifferent to poetical form, and her work is sometimes spoilt by over-strained sentiment, yet her enthusiasm and her noble ideals have not failed to exercise a powerful influence on her age, and by many she is considered our greatest poetess.

We began this short sketch of the main periods of our English literature with the thought that the true poet was the "vates," or seer; we end with the names of two men who have certainly left their impress for lasting good on our own generation, and were worthy in every sense to join that grand fellowship in the Poets' Corner of those most precious national possessions: for, as Carlyle tells us, "A true poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the 'Eternal Melodies,' is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation; we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves; his life is a rich lesson to us, and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us."

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